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THADDEUS

OF

WARSAW.

Be hush'd, my dark spirit! for wisdom condemns,
When the faint and the feeble deplore;
Be strong as the rock of the ocean, that stems
A thousand wild waves on the shore—
Thro' the perils of chance, and the scowl of disdain,
May thy front be unaltered, thy courage elate!
Ah! even the name I have worshipp'd in vain,
Shall awake not the sigh of remembrance again!
To bear, is to conquer our fate.

CAMPBELL.

THADDEUS

OF

WARSAW.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

Loin d'aimer la guerre, il l'abhorre ;
En triomphant même il déplore
Les desastres qu'elle produit :
Et couronné par la victoire,
Il gémit de sa propre gloire,
Si la paix n'en est pas le fruit.

BY MISS PORTER.

VOL. II.

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THADDEUS OF WARSAW.

CHAP. I.

When Thaddeus awoke next morning he found himself more refreshed, and free from the effects of the last night's discovery, than he could have reasonably hoped. The presence of mind, and activity, which the fire called on him to exert, having forced his thoughts into a different channel, afforded his nerves an opportunity to regain some portion of their usual strength. He could now reflect on what he had heard, without suffering the crimes of another to lay him on the rack. The reins were again restored to his hands; and neither agitation, nor anxiety, shewed themselves in his face or manner.

Though the count's sensibility was very irritable, and, when suddenly attacked, it was not always that he could conceal his emotion; yet he possessed a power of look which immediately repressed the impertinence of curiosity. Indeed, this mantle of repulsion proved to be his best shield; for never had man more demands on the dignity of his soul, to shine out about his person.

Not unfrequently, when Miss Dundas, aided by the ridicule of half a dozen pretty beaux and belles was schooling her sister on the absurd civilities, which she paid to her language-master, has the sudden appearance of the count at once called a natural glow through the ladies' rouge, and silenced the gentlemen.

The morning after the fire, a little bevy of fashionable butterflies were collected, in this way, at one corner of Miss Dundas's study, when, during a moment's pause, "I hope, Miss Beaufort," cried the honourable Mr. Lascelles, (a young man of the stamp, which usually wears the impression of the last speaker,) "I hope, Miss Beaufort, you don't intend to consume the brightness of your eyes over this stupid language ?"

"What language, Mr. Lascelles ?" inquired she, "I have this moment entered the room, and I don't know what you are talking about."

"Good lud, that is very true;" cried he, "I mean a shocking jargon, which a shocking penseroso man teaches to these ladies. We want to persuade Miss Euphemia that it spoils her mouth."

"You are always misconceiving me, Mr. Lascelles;" interrupted Miss Dundas impatiently, "I did not advance one word against the language; I merely remonstrated with Phemy against her preposterous attentions to the man we hire to teach it."

"That was what I meant, Madam," resumed he, with a low bow.

"You meant what, Sir ?" demanded the little beauty, contemptuously, "but I need not ask. You are like a bad mirror, which, from radical defect, always gives false reflections."

"Very good, efaith, Miss Euphemia! I declare, sterling wit! It would do honour to Sheridan, or your sister."

"Mr. Lascelles," cried Euphemia, more vexed than before, "let me tell you such impertinence is very disgraceful in a gentleman."

"Upon my soul, Miss Euphemia!"

"Pray allow the petulant young lady to get out of her airs, (as she has, I believe, got out of her senses,) without our help;" exclaimed Miss Dundas, "for I declare to Heaven, I know not where she picked up these vile, democratic ideas."

"I am not a democrat, Diana;" answered Euphemia, rising from her seat; "and I won't stay to be abused, when I know it is all envy, because Mr. Constantine happened to say that I have a quicker memory than you have."

She left the room as she ended. Miss Dundas, ready to storm with passion, but striving to conceal it, burst into a violent laugh, and turning to Miss Beaufort, "You see, my dear," said she, "a sad specimen of Euphemia's temper; yet I hope you won't think too severely of her; for, poor thing! she has been spoilt by us all."

"Pray do not apologize to me in particular!" replied Miss Beaufort, rather coldly; "but, as you have done so, I am induced to say, that I think it probable she would have shewn her temper less, had you given your admonition in private; though I cannot doubt of her having committed something wrong."

"Yes, something very wrong;" exclaimed Miss Dundas, reddening at a rebuke from a quarter whence she so little expected one; "both Mr. Lascelles and lord Berrington there—"

"Don't bring in my name, I pray, Miss Dundas," cried the viscount, who was sitting in a recess, looking over an old edition of Massinger's plays; "you know I hate being squeezed into squabbles."

Miss Dundas dropped the corners of her mouth in contempt, and went on.

"Well then, Mr. Lascelles and Miss Poyntz here, have both, at different times, been present, when Phemy conducted herself in a very ridiculous way towards a young man, whom lady Tinemouth made a great fuss about, sending to teach us German. Can you believe it possible, that a girl of her fashion could behave in this style, without having first imbibed some very dangerous notions? I am sure that I am right, for she treats him with three times the politeness, which she uses to the gentlemen who are now in the room." Miss Dundas, supposing that she had set the business in a light beyond controversy, stopped with an air of triumph. Miss Beaufort perceived that her answer was expected.

"I really cannot discover any thing in the affair so very reprehensible;" observed she, "perhaps the man you speak of may have talents and worth; he may be above his situation."

"Ah! above it, sure enough!" cried Lascelles, laughing boisterously at his own folly, "he is tall enough to be above every thing, even good manners; for, notwithstanding his plebeian calling, I don't find that he knows how to keep his distance."

"I am sorry for that, Lascelles," cried Berrington, measuring the puppy with his good-natured eye, "for these Magog men are terrible objects to us of meaner dimensions! '*A substitute shines brightly as a king, until a king be by.*'

"Why, my lord, you do not mean to compare me with such a low fellow as this? I don't understand, lord Berrington—"

"Bless me, gentlemen!" cried Miss Dundas, frightened at the angry looks of the little honourable, "why, my lord, I thought you hated squabbles."

"So I do, Miss Dundas;" replied he, laying down his book, and coming forward, "and, upon my honour, Mr. Lascelles," added he, smiling, and turning towards the coxcomb, who stood nidging his head with anger, by Miss Beaufort's chair; "upon my honour, Mr. Lascelles, I did not mean to draw any parallel between your person and talents, and those of this Mr.——, I forget his name, for truly I never saw him in my life; but, I dare swear, no comparison can exist between you."

Lascelles took the surface of this speech, and bowed; whilst his lordship, turning to Miss Beaufort, began to compliment himself, on possessing so fair an ally, in defence of the absent person.

"I never have seen him;" replied she, "and, what is more, I never heard of him, till, on entering the room, Mr. Lascelles attacked me for my opinion. I only arrived from the country last night, therefore, I am quite at a loss to guess the real grounds of this ill-judged bustle of Miss Dundas's, about a man whom she styles despicable. If he be so, why retain him in her service? And, what is more absurd, why make a person in that subordinate situation, the subject of debate amongst her friends?"

"You are right, Miss Beaufort," returned lord Berrington; "but the eloquent Miss Dundas is so kind to her friends, that she lets no opportunity

slip, of displaying her power, both over the republic of words, and the empire of her mother's family."

"Are you not severe now, lord Berrington? I thought you merciful to the poor tutor."

"No; I hope I am just on both subjects. I know her; and it is true that I have seen nothing of the tutor; but it is natural to wield the sword in favour of the defenceless, and I always regard the absent in that light."

Whilst these two conversed at one end of the room, the other groupe were arraigning the presumption of the vulgar, and the folly of them who gave it encouragement.

At a fresh burst of laughter from Miss Dundas, Miss Beaufort turned her head, as we mechanically do, on hearing an unexpected noise: her eye was arrested by the appearance of a gentleman in black, who was standing a few paces within the door. He was regarding the party before him, with that lofty tranquillity which is inseparable from high rank, when it is accompanied by virtue. His figure, his face, and his air, contained that pure simplicity of contour, which, at the same time, portrays all the graces of youth with the dignity of manhood.

Miss Beaufort in a moment perceived that he was unobserved; and, rising from her seat, "Miss Dundas," said she, "here is a gentleman."

Miss Dundas looked round carelessly.

"You may sit down, Mr. Constantine."

"Gracious Heaven!" thought Miss Beaufort, as he approached, and the ingenuous expression of his fine countenance was directed towards her, "Can this noble creature have been the subject of such impertinence!"

"I commend little Phemy's taste;" whispered lord Berrington, leaving his seat; "ha! Miss Beaufort, a young Apollo?"

"And not in disguise!" replied she in the same manner, just as Thaddeus had bowed to her; and, with '*veiled lids*,' was taking up a book from the table; not to read, but literally to have an object to look on, which could not insult him.

"What did Miss Dundas say was his name?" whispered the viscount.

"Constantine, I think."

"Mr. Constantine," said the benevolent Berrington, "will you accept of this chair?"

Thaddeus declined it. But the viscount read in the '*proud humility*' of his bow, that he had not always waited, like a dependent, on the nods of insolent men and women of fashion; and with a good-humoured compulsion, he added, "Pray oblige me, for by that means I shall have an excuse to squeeze into the *Sultane* which is so '*happy as to bear the weight of Beaufort!*"

Though Miss Beaufort was almost a stranger to his lordship, having only seen him once before, (for ten minutes, and that hardly,) with her cousin in Leicestershire, she smiled at this unexpected freedom, and, in consideration of the motive, made room for him on the sofa.

Insult was not swifter than kindness, in its passage to the heart of Thaddeus; who, whilst he received the viscount's chair, raised his face towards him with a look, beaming such graciousness and obligation, that Miss Beaufort turned with renewed contempt on the party, who were leaving the study.

The instant Miss Dundas closed the door after her, lord Berrington exclaimed, "Upon my honour, Mr. Constantine, I have a good mind to put

that terrible pupil of yours into my next comedy ! Don't you think she would beat Katherine and Petruchio all to nothing ? I declare I will have her."

" In *propria persona*, I hope ?" asked Miss Beaufort, with more bitterness than she was accustomed to conceive, much less approve, by giving it expression.

The count remained silent during these remarks, though he fully appreciated the first civil treatment which had greeted him since his admission within the doors of lady Dundas. Miss Euphemia's attentions owned any other source than benevolence.

Miss Beaufort wished to relieve his embarrassment by addressing him ; but the more she thought, the less she knew what to say ; and she had just abandoned it as a vain attempt, when Euphemia entered the room alone. She courtesied to Thaddeus, and took her place at the table. Lord Berrington rose.

" I must say, good bye, Miss Euphemia ; I will not disturb your studies. Farewell, Miss Beaufort," added he, addressing her, and bending his lips to her hand, " adieu ! I shall look in upon you to-morrow. Good morning, Mr. Constantine."

Thaddeus bowed to him, and the viscount disappeared.

" I am surprised, Miss Beaufort," observed Euphemia pettishly, her temper not having subsided since her sister's lecture, " how you can endure that coxcomb !"

" Pardon me, Euphemia," replied she, " though I did not exactly expect the ceremony his lordship uses in taking leave, yet I think that there is a generosity in his sentiments which deserves a better title."

"I know nothing about his sentiments, for I always run away from his conversation. A better title! I declare you make me laugh. Did you ever see such fantastical dressing? I vow to heaven, I never meet him without thinking of Jemmy Jessamy, and the rest of the gossamer beaux, who squired our grandmothers!"

"My acquaintance with lord Berrington is trifling;" returned Miss Beaufort, withdrawing her eyes from the pensive features of the count, who was sorting the lessons: "Yet I am so far prepossessed in his favour, that I see little in his appearance to reprehend. However, I will not contest that point, as perhaps the philanthropy I this morning discovered in his heart, the honest warmth with which he defended a traduced character, after you left the room, might render his person as charming in my eyes, as I certainly found his mind."

Thaddeus had not, for a long time, heard such sentiments out of lady Tinemouth's circle; and he now looked up, to take a distinct view of the speaker.

In consequence of the established mode, that the presiding lady of the house is to give the tone to her guests, many were the lords and ladies who sat with the count in Miss Dundas's library, whose faces he was as ignorant of, when they went out, as when they came in. They took little notice of him; and he, regarding them much less, pursued his occupation, without evincing a greater consciousness of their presence, than what mere ceremony demanded.

Accordingly, this morning, when, in compliance with lord Berrington's politeness, he received his chair, and saw him remove to a sofa, beside a

very beautiful woman, he supposed that she resembled the rest of Miss Dundas's friends, and never directed his eyes a second time to her figure. But when he heard her (in a voice that was melody itself) defend his lordship's character, on principles, which bore the most honourable testimony to her own, his eyes rivetted themselves on her face.

Though a long muslin wrapper involved her fine person, a modest grace was observed in every limb. Her snowy arm, clasped with a loose pearl bracelet, was extended towards Euphemia in the energy of her defence; her beautiful eyes shone with benevolence, and her rosy lips seemed to breathe balm whilst she spoke.

Thaddeus did not withdraw his fixed eyes, until they encountered those of Miss Beaufort, which immediately retreated, with a deep blush covering her face and neck. She never had met such a look before; except from the dark and penetrating glances of her cousin, who had long elected himself the guardian of her heart.

Miss Beaufort was the orphan heiress of admiral Beaufort, the only brother of the late lady Somerset. Her parents dying at an early age bequeathed her to the care of lady Somerset, her paternal aunt; and nominated Sir Robert Somerset, her ladyship's husband, to be her sole guardian. When lady Somerset died, which happened three days before her son's arrival from the continent, a double portion of Sir Robert's love fell upon this niece. In her society alone, he found comfort; and, relinquishing the splendid scenes of London, he retired into the country; living sometimes at one seat, and sometimes at another, in hopes, by

change of place, to dissipate some of the grief which crowded round his heart.

Sir Robert Somerset, from the time that his marriage took place with Miss Beaufort, to the hour in which he followed her to the grave, attracted esteem and affection from people of every rank. The fascination of his manners, united with the inflexible probity of his character, both as a man and as a senator, drew after him the confidence of all men. The good, and even the bad, looked on him as a pillar of strength, whenever reliance was to be allied with virtue. For instance, the excellent lord Arun consigned his only child to his protection; and that sordid peculator, Sir Hector Dundas, when he descended to *Hades*, named Sir Robert Somerset to be the principal trustee over the immense fortunes of his wife and daughters.

This latter circumstance explains the intimacy between two families, the female parts of which might otherwise never have met.

On Sir Robert's last visit to London, lady Dundas became so urgent in requesting Miss Beaufort to spend the ensuing season with her in town, that he could not, without absolute rudeness, refuse. In compliance with this arrangement, Miss Beaufort, accompanied by Mrs. Dorothy Somerset, a maiden sister of the baronet's, quitted Deerhurst, and settled themselves in Harley-street for the remainder of the winter; at least, the winter of fashion; which, by a strange effect of her magic hand, in defiance of grassy meadows, leafy trees, and sweetly scented flowers, extends its nominal sceptre over the vernal months of April, May, and even the rich treasures of '*resplendent June*.'

The summer part of this winter, Miss Beaufort reluctantly consented should be sacrificed to cere-

mony, in the dust and heat of a great city ; and if the melancholy, which increased upon Sir Robert, every day since the death of his wife, had not rendered her averse to oppose his wishes, she certainly would have made objections to the visit.

During their journey, she could not refrain from drawing a comparison between the insipid routine of lady Dundas's way of life, and the rational, as well as splendid arrangement of her late aunt.

Lady Somerset's monthly assemblies were not only the most elegant and brilliant parties about town, but her weekly *conversasiones* surpassed every thing of the kind in the kingdom. On these nights, her ladyship's rooms used to be filled with the most eminent characters, which England could produce. There, the young Mary Beaufort, whose ardent disposition, impelled with a comet's velocity to the feet of genius, listened to pious divines of every christian persuasion : there, she gathered wisdom from real philosophers ; and, in the society of our best living poets, cherished an enthusiasm for all that is great and good. Sir Robert Somerset's house, on these evenings, reminded the visitor, of what he had read, or imagined, of the school of Athens. He beheld, not only sages, soldiers, statesmen, and poets, but intelligent and amiable women ; amongst whom, the beautiful Mary imbibed that steady reverence of virtue and talent, which no intermixture with the common *ephemera* of the day could either displace or alloy.

Notwithstanding this freedom from the chains, with which her fashionable advisers would have shackled her mind, Miss Beaufort possessed too much judgment and delicacy, to flash her liberty in their eyes. Enjoying her independence with meekness, she held it more secure. Mary was no de-

claimer; not even in defence of oppressed goodness, or injured genius. Aware that direct opposition often incenses malice, she directed the shaft from its aim, if it were in her power; and when the attempt failed, strove, by respect or compassion, to heal what she could not prevent. Thus, whatever she said or did bore the stamp of her soul, whose leading attribute was modesty. By having learnt much, and thought more, she proved, in her conduct, that reflection is the alchymy, which turns knowledge into wisdom.

Never was Miss Beaufort incapable of attempting something towards her benevolent intention, until she witnessed the count Sobieski standing under an over-bearing insolence, which his dignified composure rebounded upon his insulters. The situation was new to her; and when she dropped her confused eyes beneath his unexpected gaze, she marvelled within herself, at the ease with which she had taken up the cause of lord Berrington, and the difficulty she found, to summon one word as a repellant, to the unmerited attack on the man before her.

Euphemia cared nothing about lord Berrington; to her, his faults, or his virtues, were alike indifferent; and forgetting that civility demanded some reply to Miss Beaufort's last observation, or rather taking advantage of the tolerated privilege usurped by many high-bred people, of being ill-bred, when and how they please, she returned to Thaddeus, and said, with a forced smile,

"Mr. Constantine, I don't like your opinion upon the ode I shewed to you; I think it a

very absurd opinion ; or perhaps you did not conceive me rightly ?"

Miss Beaufort took up a book, that her unoccupied attention might not disturb their studies.

Euphemia resumed, with a more natural dimple, and touching his glove with the rosy points of her fingers,

" You are stupid at translation."

Thaddeus coloured, and sat uneasily ; he knew not how to evade this direct, though covered attack.

" I am a bad poet, madam. Indeed it would be dangerous for a good one to attempt the same path with Sappho and Phillips."

Euphemia now blushed as deeply as the count, but from another motive ; and opening her grammar, whispered, " you are either a very dull, or a very modest man !" and, sighing, began to repeat her lesson.

Whilst he bent his head over the sheet which he was correcting, she suddenly exclaimed, " Bless me, Mr. Constantine, what have you been doing ? I hope you don't read in bed ! The top of your hair is burnt to a cinder ! Why, you look much more like having been in a fire, than Miss Beaufort does."

Thaddeus put his hand to his head.

" I did not know that I had carried away any more marks of a fire, in which I really was last night, than scorched clothes."

" A fire !" interrupted Miss Beaufort, closing her book, " was it not near Tottenham-court-road ?"

" It was, madam," answered he, in a tone almost as surprised as her own.

"Good gracious!" cried Euphemia, exerting her little voice, that she might be heard, before Miss Beaufort could have time to reply, "then, I vow, you are the gentleman, who, Miss Beaufort said, ran into the burning house, and, covered with flames, saved two children from perishing!"

"Am I so happy as to meet the lady," replied he, turning with an animated air to Miss Beaufort; "in you, madam, who so humanely assisted the poor sufferers, and received the child from my arms?"

"It was, indeed, myself, Mr. Constantine," returned she, a tear swimming over her eye, which in a moment gave the cue to the tender Euphemia. She drew out her handkerchief; and, whilst her pretty cheeks overflowed, and her sweet voice was rendered sweeter, by an emotion, raised by ten thousand delightful fancies, she took hold of Miss Beaufort's hand.

"O! my lovely friend, wonder not that I esteem this brave Constantine, far beyond his present station!"

Thaddeus drew back. Miss Beaufort looked amazed; but Euphemia had mounted her romantic Pegasus, and the scene was too sentimental to close.

"Come here, Mr. Constantine," cried she, extending her other hand to him. Wondering where this folly would terminate, he gave it to her; when, instantly joining it with that of Miss Beaufort, she pressed them close together, and said, "Sweet Mary! Heroic Constantine! I thus elect you the two dearest friends of my heart. So charmingly associated in the delightful task of

compassion, you shall ever be co-mingled in my faithful bosom !"

Then putting her handkerchief to her eyes, she walked out of the room, leaving Miss Beaufort and the count confused and confounded, by the side of each other. Miss Beaufort, suspecting that some extravagant passion subsisted between Euphemia and her young tutor, declined speaking first. Thaddeus, fixing his gaze on her downcast and revolving countenance, perceived nothing like offended pride at his undesigned presumption. He saw that she was only embarrassed ; and after a minute's hesitation said,—

" I hope that Miss Beaufort is sufficiently acquainted with the romance of Miss Euphemia's character, to pardon the action, unintentional on my part, of having touched her hand ? I declare I had no expectation of Miss Euphemia's design."

" Do not make any apology to me, Mr. Constantine," returned she, resuming her seat, whence she had arisen on the abrupt departure of Euphemia ; " To be sure, I was a little electrified, by the strange situation, in which the vivid feelings of Miss Euphemia have just made us actors. But I shall not forego my claim on a share of what she promised —your acquaintance ?"

Thaddeus expressed his high sense of her condescension.

" I am not fond of fine terms," continued she, smiling ; " but I know, that time and merit must purchase esteem. I can engage for the first, as I am to remain in town at least three months ; but for the last, I fear, I shall never have the opportunity of giving such an earnest of my deserving, as you did last night of yours."

Footsteps sounded on the stairs. Thaddeus took up his hat, and bowing, replied to her compliment, with such a modest, yet noble grace, that she gazed after him with wonder and concern. Before he closed the door he again bowed. Pleased with the transient look of pleasure, which at parting beamed from his eyes,—through whose ingenuous mirrors every thought of his soul might be read, she smiled a second adieu ; and as he disappeared, left the room by another passage.

CHAP. II.

When the count appeared the succeeding day in Harley-street, Miss Beaufort introduced him to Mrs. Dorothy Somerset, as the gentleman who had so gallantly preserved the lives of the children at the hazard of his own.

Notwithstanding the lofty tossings of Miss Dundas's head, the good old maid paid him several encomiums on his intrepidity; and telling him, that the sufferers were the wife and family of a poor tradesman, who was gone into the country, she added, "But we saw them comfortably lodged before we left them; and, all the time we staid, I could not help congratulating myself on the easy compliance of Mary with my whims. I hate to sleep at an inn; and to prevent it then, I had prevailed on Miss Beaufort to pursue our road to town even through the night. It was lucky that it happened so, for I am certain that Mary will not allow these poor creatures a long lament over the wreck of their little property."

"How charmingly charitable, my lovely friend!" cried Euphemia, "let us make a collection for this unfortunate woman and her babes. Pray, as a small tribute, take that from me!" She put five guineas into the hand of the blushing Mary.

The ineffable grace with which the confused Miss Beaufort laid the money on her aunt's knee, did not escape the observation of Thaddeus; neither did the animated approbation of his eye pass unnoticed, by the amiable object of his attention.

When lady Tinemouth was informed by the count, of the addition to the Harley-street party, her ladyship declared her pleasure at the news; saying, that she had been well acquainted with Mrs. Dorothy and her niece, for some time before lady Somerset's death.

As the countess paused, Thaddeus was on the point of expressing his concern that Pembroke had lost his highly prized mother; but recollecting that lady Tinemouth was ignorant of their knowing each other, he allowed her to proceed without a remark.

"I never have been in company with her ladyship's son," continued the countess; "it was during his absence on the continent, that I was introduced to lady Somerset. She was a woman, who possessed the rare talent of conforming herself to all descriptions of people; and whilst the complacency of her attentions surpassed the most refined flattery, she commanded the highest veneration for herself. Hence you may credit my satisfaction in this acquaintance; which, it is probable, would never have taken place, had I been the happy countess of Tinemouth, instead of a deserted wife. Notwithstanding that the family of the Somersets were related to my lord, they had long treated him with coldness; and doubly disgusted at his late flagrant behaviour, they commenced a friendship with me, I believe, to demonstrate more fully their detestation of him. Indeed my husband is a creature of inconsistency. No man possessed more power to attract friends, than lord Tinemouth; and no man possessed less power to retain them; as fast as he made one, he offended the other; and, through these means, he has at this time deprived himself of every individual out of his own house,

who would not regard his death as a fortunate circumstance."

"But, lady Somerset," cried Thaddeus, impatient to change a subject, every word of which went like a dagger to his heart, "I mean Miss Dorothy Somerset, Miss Beaufort—"

"Yes," returned her ladyship; "I see, kind Mr. Constantine, your friendly solicitude to disengage me from retrospections so painful! Well then, I knew, and very much esteemed, the two ladies you mention; but the death of lady Somerset, and their consequent residence in the country, have prevented a renewal of this pleasure. However, as they are now in town, I will thank you to acquaint them with my intention to call upon them in Harley-street. I remember thinking Miss Beaufort a very charming girl."

Thaddeus thought so too; he saw that she was beautiful; he had witnessed instances of her goodness; and the recollection filled his mind with a complacency, which was quickly disturbed by the entrance of Miss Egerton, and lady Sara Roos.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Constantine;" cried the lively Maria, shaking hands with him, "you are the very man whom I have been plotting against."

Lady Tinemouth was uneasy at the care with which lady Sara averted her face; well knowing that it was to conceal the powerful agitation of her features, which always took place at the sight of Thaddeus.

"Well, what is your plot, Miss Egerton?" inquired he, "I shall consider myself honoured by your commands, and do not require a conspiracy to entrap my obedience."

"That's a good boy! Then I have only to apply to you, lady Tinemouth. Your ladyship must know," cried she, "that as lady Sara and I were a moment ago driving up the hay-market, I nodded to Mr. Coleman, who was coming out of the play-house. When he stopped, I pulled the check-string, and we had a great deal of con-fab out of the window. He tells me, that a new farce is to come out this day week; and he hoped that I would be there! No, says I, I cannot; for I am on a visit with that precise woman the countess of Tinemouth, who would not, to save you and all your generation, come into such a mob. Her ladyship shall have my box, cried he, for I would not for the world lose the honour of your opinion on the merits of my farce. To be sure not! cries I, so I accepted his box, and drove off, plotting with lady Sara, how to get your ladyship as a chaprone, and Mr. Constantine for our beau. He has promised; so, dear lady Tinemouth, don't be inflexible!"

Thaddeus was confounded at the dilemma into which his ready acquiescence had involved his prudence. The countess shook her head.

"Now, I declare, lady Tinemouth," exclaimed Miss Egerton, "this is an absolute stingy fit! You are afraid of your purse! You know that this private box precludes all awkward meetings, and you can have no excuse."

"But it cannot preclude all awkward sights;" answered her ladyship. "You know, Maria, that I never go into public for fear of being shocked by the angry looks of my lord or son."

"Plague them both!" cried Miss Egerton, pettishly, "I wish the Lord would take your lord and son out of the world altogether!"

"Maria!" retorted her ladyship, with a grave air.

"Rebuke me, lady Tinemouth, if you like; I confess I am no Serena; and these trials of temper don't agree with my constitution. There," cried she, throwing a silver medal on the table, and laughing in spite of herself, "there is our free entrance; but I will send it back, and so break poor Coleman's heart."

"Fie, Maria;" answered her ladyship, patting her half-angry cheek, "would you owe to your petulance, what was denied to your good humour?"

"Then your ladyship will go!" exclaimed she, exultingly, "you have yielded to my good humour; these sullens were a part of my stratagem. I won't let you recede."

The idea struck lady Tinemouth, that this would be a proper opportunity to shew one of the theatres to her young friend, without involving him in expense or obligation; and accordingly she ratified her consent.

"Do you intend to favour us with your company, lady Sara?" asked the countess, with a hope that she would refuse.

Lady Sara, who had been standing, during the debate, silently at the window, rather proudly answered—

"Yes, madam, if you will honour me with your protection."

Lady Tinemouth was the only one present, who understood the resentment which these words conveyed; and, almost believing that she had insulted her, by implying suspicion, she approached her ladyship, with a pleading anxiety of countenance; "Then, lady Sara, perhaps you will dine with me?" said she, "I mean to call on Mrs.

Dorothy Somerset, and invite her to be of the party."

Lady Sara courtesied her acceptance of the invitation, and smiling, appeared to think no more of the matter. But she neither forgot it, nor found herself able to forgive lady Tinemouth, for betraying her into a confidence, which her own turbulent passions made too easy of access. She had listened unwillingly to the reasonable declaration of the countess, that her only way to retreat from an error, which threatened criminality, was to avoid the object.

"When a married woman," observed her ladyship, "is so unhappy as to love any man beside her husband, her only safety rests in the resolution to quit his society, and to banish his image whenever it obtrudes."

Lady Sara, believing herself incapable of this exertion, hated the woman who thought it expedient. Lady Tinemouth, by letter and conversation, tried to display, in every possible light, the enormity of giving encouragement to such an attachment; and ended with urging the consideration of her duty to Heaven.

Of this argument lady Sara knew little. She never reflected on the nature of her Creator, though she sometimes went to church, repeated the prayers, without being conscious of their spirit; and, when the coughing, sneezing, and blowing of noses, which commonly accompany the text, subsided, she generally called up the remembrance of the last ball, or an anticipation of the next assembly, to amuse herself until the prosing business was over. From church she drove to the park, where, bowling round the ring, or sauntering in the gardens, she soon forgot, that

there existed, in the universe, a Power of higher consequence to please, than her own vanity ; and the admiration of the spectators.

Lady Sara would have shuddered at hearing any one declare himself a deist, much more an atheist ; but for any influence, which her nominal belief held over her desires, she might as well have been either. She never committed an action deserving the name of premeditated injury : nor went far out of her way, to do her best friend a service ; not because she wanted inclination, but she ceased to remember, both the petitioner, and his petition, before he had been five minutes from her sight. She had read as much, as most fine ladies have read : a few histories, a few volumes of essays, a few novels, and now and then a little poetry, comprised the whole range of her studies ; these, with morning calls, and evening assemblies, filled up the whole of her day. Such had been the routine of her life, until she met the count Sobieski at lady Tinemouth's ; which event caused a total revolution in her mind and conduct.

The strength of lady Sara's understanding might have credited a better education ; but her passions, bearing an equal power with this vigour, and having taken a wrong direction, she neither acknowledged the will, nor the capability, to hold the empire of her reason. When love entered her heart, his first conquest was her vanity ; she surrendered all her admirers, in the hope of securing the admiration of Thaddeus : his second victory made him master of her discretion ; she revealed her unhappy affection to lady Tinemouth, and more than hinted it to himself. What had she else to lose ? she believed her honour to be safer than her life. *Her honour* was the term. She had no conception, or, at best,

a faint one, that a breach of the marriage vow could be an outrage on the laws of Heaven. The word *Sin* has been gradually banished the oligarchy of fashion, from the hour in which Charles the second, and his profligate court, trod down piety along with hypocrisy—to this day, when the new philosophy, having accomplished in total outlawry, denounced it a rebel to decency, and the freedom of man.

Thus the christian religion, being driven from the haunts of the great, pagan morality is raised from that prostration, where, Dagon-like, it fell at the feet of the scriptures, and is again erected as the idol of adoration. Guilt against Heaven fades before the decrees of man; his law of ethics reprobates *crime*; but crime is only a temporary transgression, in opposition to the general good; it draws no consequent punishment, heavier than the anger of the offended parties. Morality neither promises rewards after death, nor chastisement for error. The disciples of this independent doctrine hold forth instances of the *perfectibility of human actions*, produced by the unassisted decisions of human intellect on the limits of right and wrong. They admire virtue, because it is beautiful. They practise it, because it is heroic. They do not abstain from the gratification of an intemperate wish, under a belief that it is sinful, but in obedience to their reason, which rejects the commission of a vicious act, because it is uncomely. In the first case, God is their judge; in the latter, themselves. The comparison need only be proposed, to humble the pride, that made it necessary. How do these systemisers, refine and subtilize? How do they dwell on the principle of virtue, and turn it in

every metaphysical light, until their philosophy rarifies it to nothing! Some degrade, and others abandon, the only basis, on which an upright character can stand with firmness. The bulwark, which revelation erected between the passions and the soul, is levelled first; and then, that *instinctive rule of right*, which the modern casuist nominates the citadel of virtue, falls of course.

By such gradations is the progress of depravity accomplished; and the general leaven having worked to lady Sara's mind, on such premises did she, (though she might not arrange them so distinctly,) deduce, that what she called preserving her honour, was a mere establishment of man; and might be extended, or limited by him, to any length he liked. For instance, the Turks were not content with one wife, but appropriated hundreds to their possession; and, because such an enlargement was permitted by Mohammed, no other nation presumed to call them culpable.

Hence she thought, that if she could once reconcile herself to believe, that her own happiness was dearer to her than the notice of half a thousand people, to whom she was indifferent; that only in their opinion and the world's, her flying to the protection of Thaddeus would be a crime; could she confidently think this, what should deter her from instantly throwing herself into the arms of the man she loved?"

"Ah!" cried she one night, as she traversed her chamber in a paroxysm of tears, "what are the vows I have sworn? How can I keep them? I have sworn to love, to honour captain Roos; but, in spite of myself, without any action of my own, I have broken both these oaths. I cannot love him;

I hate him ; and I cannot honour the man I hate. What have I else to break? Nothing. My nuptial vow is as completely annihilated, as if I had left him never to return.—How?" cried she, after a pause of some minutes, "how shall I know what passes in the mind of Constantine? Did he love me, would he protect me, I would brave the whole universe ; oh, I should be the happiest of the happy!"

Fatal conclusion of reflection! It infected her dreaming and her waking fancy. She regarded every thing as an enemy that opposed her passion ; and, as the first of these enemies, she detested lady Tinemouth. The countess's last admonishing letter enraged her by its arguments ; and throwing it into the fire, with execrations and tears, she determined to pursue her own will, but to affect being influenced by her ladyship's counsels.

The count Sobieski, who surmised not the hundredth part of the love which lady Sara bore towards him, began to hope, that her ardent manner had misled him ; or that she had seen the danger of such imprudence.

Under these impressions, the party for the theatre was settled ; and Thaddeus, after sitting an hour in Grosvenor Place, returned to his humble home, and attendance on his friend.

CHAP. III.

The addition of Miss Dorothy Somerset and Miss Beaufort, to the morning groupe at lady Dundas's, imparted a less reluctant motion to the before tardy feet of the count, whenever he turned them towards Harley-street.

Miss Dorothy readily supposed him to have been better born than he appeared; and, displeased with the treatment he received from Miss Dundas and her guests, behaved to him herself, with the most gratifying politeness.

Aunt Dorothy, (for that was the title, by which every branch of the baronet's family addressed her,) was full twenty years the senior of her brother, Sir Robert Somerset. Having in her youth been thought very like the famous and lovely Mrs. Woffington, she was considered the beauty of her time; and, as such, for ten years, continued the reigning toast. Nevertheless, she arrived at the age of sixty-five without having been either the object, or the subject, of a fervent passion.

Possessing a fine understanding, a fine taste, and fine feelings, she had, by some chance, escaped love. It cannot be denied, that she was much admired, much respected, and much esteemed; and that she received two or three splendid proposals from men, whom she had animated thus far. Some of these men she admired, some she respected, and some she esteemed, but not one did she love; and she successively refused them all. Shortly after their discharge, they generally consoled themselves

by marrying other women, who, perhaps, wanted both the charms and the sense of Miss Somerset; yet she congratulated them on their choice, and usually became the warm friend of the happy couple.

Thus, year passed over year; Miss Somerset continued the esteemed of every worthy heart, though she could not kindle the embers of a livelier glow, in any one of them; and, at the age of sixty-five she found herself an old maid; but possessing as much good humour, and affection towards the young people about her, as if she owned half a dozen of her own offspring, to mingle in the circle.

This amiable old lady usually took her netting into the library beside the fair students; and, whenever Thaddeus entered the room, (so natural is it for generous natures to sympathise,) his eyes first sought her venerable figure; then glancing round, to catch an assuring beam from the heavenly countenance of the lovely Mary, he seated himself with confidence.

The presence of these ladies operated, as a more than sufficient antidote, to the disagreeables of his situation. To them he directed all the attention, that was not required by his occupation; he heard only them speak, when a hundred others were talking; he saw only them, when a hundred others were in company.

In addition to this pleasant change, Miss Euphemia's passion assumed a form, less capable of tormenting. She had been reading Madame D' Arblay's Camilla; and becoming enamoured of the delicacy and pensive silence of the interesting heroine, she determined on adopting the same character; and, at the same time, taking it into her

ever creative brain, that Constantine's coldness bore a strict affinity to the caution of Edgar Mandelbert, without further debate, she wiped the rouge off her face, and prepared to '*let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on her damask cheek.*'

To afford decorous support to this fancy, her gayest clothes were thrown aside, to make way for a negligence of apparel, which cost her two hours each morning to compose. Her dimpling smiles were now quite banished. She was ever sighing, and ever silent, and ever lolling and leaning about; or reclining along the sofa, in some pretty disconsolate attitude, just selected from a folio of prints, in which she daily studied her dress and movements.

Thaddeus preferred this pathetic whim, before her former lover-like advances; it afforded him quiet, and relieved him from much embarrassment.

Every succeeding visit induced Miss Beaufort to observe him with nicer accuracy, and a more lively interest. The nobleness, yet humility, with which he behaved towards herself and her aunt, and the manly serenity with which he suffered the insulting sarcasms of Miss Dundas, led her not merely to conceive, but to entertain, many doubts, that his present situation was far below his birth.

The ladies who dropped in now and then on the sisters were not backward in espousing the game of ridicule, as it played away a few minutes to join in a laugh with the *witty Diana*. These gracious beings, from their sex, knew they were privileged to offend; but it was not always that the gentlemen durst venture beyond a shrug of the shoulder, a drop of the lip, a wink of the eye, or a raising of the brows. However, Mary observed with contempt, that they were prudent enough to exercise these specimens of hostility, only when the count

had turned his back ; and regarding him with increased admiration, she was indignant, and then disdainful, at the motives of envy, which actuated these men to insult him under the mask of indifference.

The occasional calls of lady Tinemouth and Miss Egerton stimulated the cabal against Thaddeus. The sincere sentiment of equality with themselves, which these two ladies evinced by their behaviour to him ; and the same conduct being adopted by Miss Dorothy and her beautiful niece, besides the evident partiality of Euphemia, altogether inflamed the spleen of Miss Dundas *coterie* to absolute rudeness.

This little phalanx, at the head of which was the superb Diana, could offer no real reason for disliking a man, not only beneath them, but who had never offended them even by implication. It was a sufficient apology to their easy consciences, that " he gave himself such courtly airs as were quite ridiculous ; that his presumption was astonishing. In short, they were all idle ; and it was monstrous amusing to lounge a morning with the rich Dundas's and hoax monsieur."

Had Thaddeus known one fourth of the insolent derision, with which his misfortunes were treated behind his back, though he thought that the very breath which he breathed ought to be sacrificed, if conducive to the life of his friend, perhaps even his necessity could not, in this case, have detained him in his employment. The brightness of a brave man's name makes shadows perceptible, which might pass unmarked over a duller surface. Sobieski's delicate honour would have supposed itself sullied by enduring such contumely with toleration. But, as was said before, the male adjuncts

of Miss Dundas received such a prompt warning, from an accidental knitting of the count's brow, that they never could muster temerity to sport their wit to his face.

These circumstances were not lost upon Mary; she collected them as part of a treasure, and turned them over on her pillow with the jealous examination of a miser. Like Euphemia, she supposed Thaddeus to be other than he seemed; yet her fancy did not gift him with the blood of the Bourbons; she merely believed him to be a gentleman; and, from the maternal manner of lady Tinemouth towards him, suspected that her ladyship knew more of his history than she chose to reveal.

Things were in this taste, when the countess requested that Miss Dorothy would trust her niece, the ensuing evening, with herself and a little party to the Hay-market Theatre. The good lady having consented, Miss Beaufort received the permission with pleasure; and, as she was invited to sup with her ladyship, she formed the hope that something might fall from the countess or Miss Egerton, which would throw a light on the true situation of Mr. Constantine.

From infancy Miss Beaufort had loved with enthusiasm all kinds of excellence. Indeed, she esteemed no person warmly whom she did not think eminent in the liberal qualities over the rest of mankind. She sought for something to respect in every character; and when, by chance, she found any thing to admire, her susceptible soul blazed, and by its own pure flame, lit her to a closer inspection into the object for whom she was interested.

When lady Somerset collected all the virtue and talent in the country around her table, they were

not brought there on a vain errand. From them, Miss Beaufort gathered her best lessons in morality and taste, and from them her earliest perceptions of friendship. Mary was the beloved pupil, and respected friend, of the brightest characters in England ; and though they were men, some of whom had not passed the age of forty, she never had been in love, nor had she mistaken the nature of her esteem so far, as to call it by that name. Hence, she was neither afraid nor ashamed to acknowledge a correspondence, which she knew to be her highest distinction. But, had the frank and innocent Mary exhibited half the like attentions, which she paid to these men in one hour, to the common class of young men through the course of a month, they would have declared, " that the poor girl was over-head in love with them ; and have pitied (what they justly denominate) her folly." Foolish must that woman be, who will sacrifice the most precious gift in her possession, to the superficial graces, or empty blandishments, of a self-idolized coxcomb.

Such a being was not Mary Beaufort ; and on these principles she contemplated the extraordinary merits of the exiled Thaddeus, with an interest honourable to her penetration and heart.

When Miss Egerton called in lady Sara Roos's carriage to take her to the hay-market, Mary was not displeased at seeing Mr. Constantine step out of the coach to hand her in. During their drive, Miss Egerton informed her, that, from lady Tinemouth's sudden indisposition, lady Sara had kindly undertaken to be their chaprone ; and had promised to bring them all back to sup in Grosvenor Place.

Lady Sara never had seen Mary, though she frequently had heard of her beauty and vast fortune: this last qualification, her ladyship hoped might have given an unmerited *eclat* to the first; therefore, when she saw, in the person of Miss Beaufort, the most beautiful creature she ever had beheld, nothing could equal her surprise and vexation.

The happy lustre that beamed in the fine eyes of Mary shone like a vivifying influence around her; a bright glow animated her cheek; whilst a pleasure, for which she did not seek to account, bounded at her heart, and modulated every tone of her voice to sweetness and enchantment.

"Syren!" thought lady Sara, withdrawing her large dark eyes from her face, and turning them, full of dissolving languor, upon Thaddeus, "here are all thy charms directed!" then drawing a sigh, so deep that it made her neighbour start, she fixed her eyes on her fan, and never looked up until they reached the playhouse.

The curtain was raised as the little party seated themselves in the box.

"Can any body tell me what the play is?" asked lady Sara.

"I never thought of inquiring," replied Maria.

"I looked in the paper this morning," said Miss Beaufort, "and I think it is called *Sighs*, a translation from a Drama of Kotzebue's."

"A strange title!" was the general observation, when Mr. Suett, who personated one of the characters, beginning to speak, their attention was summoned to the stage.

On the entrance of Mr. Charles Kemble, in the character of Adelbert, the count unconsciously turned pale. He perceived, by the dress of the actor, that he was intended to personate a Pole; and,

alarmed at the probability of seeing something to recal recollections, which he strove to banish, his agitation did not allow him to hear any thing that passed.

Miss Egerton was not so tardy in the use of her eyes and ears; but stretching out her hand to the back of the box, where Thaddeus was standing by lady Sara's chair, she caught hold of his sleeve.

"There, Constantine!" cried she, "look at Adelbert! Now, that is exactly the figure *you* cut in your Polish trumpery two months ago."

The count bowed with a forced smile, and, glancing at the stage, replied—

"Then, for the first time in my life, I regret having followed a lady's advice; I think I must have lost by the change."

"Yes," rejoined she, "you have lost much fur and much embroidery; but you now look much more like a christian."

The substance of these speeches was not lost on Mary, who continued to mark, with redoubling interest, the changes which his countenance underwent along with the scene. As she sat forward, by a slight turn of her head she could discern the smallest fluctuation of the count's features; and they were not a few; for, placing himself at the back of lady Sara's chair, he leaned over, with his soul set in his eye, watching every motion of Mr. Charles Kemble.

Mary knew that Constantine was a Polander; and the surmise which she entertained of his being unfortunate, received full corroboration at the scene, wherein Adelbert is grossly insulted by the rich merchant. During the whole of it, she scarcely dared trust her eyes towards his flushed and agitated face.

The interview between Adelbert and Leopold commenced. When the former was describing his country's miseries with his own, Thaddeus, unable to bear it longer, unobserved by any but Mary, drew back into the box. In a moment or too, Mr. Charles Kemble made the following reply to an observation of Leopold's, that "poverty is no dishonour."

"Certainly none to me! To Poland, to my struggling country, I sacrificed my wealth as I would have sacrificed my life, if she had required it. My country is no more; and we are wanderers on a burthened earth, finding no refuge but in the hearts of the humane and virtuous."

The passion and force of these words could not fail of reaching the ears of Thaddeus. Mary's attention followed them to their object, by the heaving of whose breast she plainly discovered the anguish of their effect. Her heart fluttered. How willingly would she have approached him, and said something of sympathy, of consolation! but she durst not; and she turned away her tearful eye, and looked again on the stage.

Lady Sara now stood up: hanging over Mary's chair, listened with congenial emotions to the scene between Adelbert and the innocent Rose. Lady Sara felt it all in her own bosom; and, looking round, to catch what was passing in the count's mind, she beheld him leaning against a corner of the box with his head inclined to the curtain of the door.

"Mr. Constantine!" almost unconsciously escaped her lips. He started, and discovered, by the humidity of his eyes, why he had withdrawn. Her ladyship's tears were gliding down her cheeks. Miss Egerton, greatly amazed at the oddness of

the scene, turned to Miss Beaufort, who a moment before having caught a glimpse of the distressed countenance of the count, could only smile, and bow her head to Maria's observation.

Who is there that can enter into the secret folds of the heart, and know all its miseries? Who participate in that joy, which dissolves and rarifies man to the essence of Heaven? Soul must mingle with soul, and the ethereal voice of the spirit must speak, before these can be comprehended.

Mary, ready to suffocate with the emotion which she repelled from her eyes, gladly affected to be absorbed in the business of the stage, (not one object of which she now saw,) and with breathless attention lost not one soft whisper, which lady Sara poured into the ear of Thaddeus.

"Why?" asked her ladyship, in a tremulous and low tone, "Why should we seek ideal sorrows, when those of our own hearts are beyond alleviation? Happy Rose!" sighed her ladyship, "Constantine," continued she, "do not you think that Adelbert is consoled at least, by the affection of that lovely woman?"

Like Miss Beaufort, Constantine had hitherto replied with bows only.

"Come," added lady Sara, laying her soft hand on his arm, and regarding him with a look of tenderness so unequivocal, that he cast his eyes to the ground, although its compassion and sympathy touched his heart; "Come," repeated she, animated by the faint colour which tinged his cheek, "you know that I have the care of this party; and I must not allow our only beau to be melancholy."

"I beg your pardon, lady Sara," returned he,—in gratitude to her kind commiseration, pressing

the hand that yet rested on his arm, "I am not very well. I wish that I had not seen this play!"

Lady Sara sunk into the seat from which she had arisen. He had never before taken her hand, except when assisting her to her carriage; this pressure shook her very soul, and awakened hopes, which rendered her for a moment incapable of sustaining herself, or venturing a reply.

There was something in the tones of lady Sara's voice, and in her manner, far more expressive than her words: mutual sighs, which breathed from her ladyship's bosom, and that of Thaddeus, as they sat down, made a cold shiver run from the head to the foot of Miss Beaufort. Mary's surprise at the meaning of this emotion caused a second tremour, and with a palpitating heart she asked herself a few questions.

Could this interesting young man, whom every person of sense appeared to esteem and respect, could he sully his virtues, by participating in a passion with a married woman? No; it was impossible.

Notwithstanding this decision, she determined to observe him narrowly: and be well convinced of his worth, before she permitted him to augment the share of regard, which he already possessed in her bosom.

With her head full of these reflections, she awaited the farce, without observing when it appeared. Indeed, none present knew any thing about this piece, (to see which they had professedly come to the theatre) excepting Miss Egerton; whose ever merry spirits had enjoyed the humour of *Totum* in the play, and now laughed heartily, though unaccompanied, through the ridiculous whims of the farce.

Nothing that passed could totally disengage the mind of the count from those remembrances, which the recent drama had aroused. When the melting voice of lady Sara, in whispers, tried to recal his attention, by a start only he evinced his recollection of not being alone. Convinced, however, of the kindness of her motive, he exerted himself; and, by the time that the curtain dropt, he had so far rallied his spirits, as to be able to attend to the civility of seeing the ladies safe out of the theatre.

Miss Egerton, laughing, as he assisted her into the carriage, said, "I verily believe, Mr. Constantine, had I glanced round during the play, I should have seen as pretty a lacrymal scene between you and lady Sara, as any on the stage. I won't have this flirting! I declare I will tell Captain Roos—"

She continued talking; but turning about to offer his service to Miss Beaufort, he heard no more.

Miss Beaufort felt strangely; she felt cold and reserved; and, undesignedly, she appeared what she felt. There was a grave dignity in her air, accompanied with a collectedness and stillness in her before animated countenance, which astonished and chilled Thaddeus, though she bowed her head, and gave him her hand to put her into the coach.

In their way home, Miss Egerton ran over the merits of the play and farce; rallied Thaddeus on the "*tall Pole*," which she threatened should be his epithet whenever he offended her; and then flying from subject to subject, talked herself and her hearers so weary, that they mutually rejoiced when the carriage stopped in Grosvenor-place.

After they had severally paid their respects to lady Tinemouth, who, being indisposed, was lying

along the sofa, she desired Thaddeus to draw a chair near to her.

"I want to learn," said she, "what you think of our English theatre?"

"Prithee, don't ask him!" cried Miss Egerton, pouring out a class of wine, "we have seen a tremendous brother Pole of his, who I believe has '*hopped off*' with all his spirits! Why, he has been looking as rueful as a half-drowned man, all the night; and for lady Sara,—and, I could swear, Miss Beaufort too, they have been two Niobe's, '*all tears*.' So, good folks, I must drink better health to you, to save myself from the vapours."

"What is all this, Mr. Constantine?" asked the countess, addressing Thaddeus, whose eyes were now fixed with grateful surprise on the blushing, though displeased face of Miss Beaufort.

"My weakness;" replied he, sighing and turning to her ladyship: "the play relates to a native of Poland; one, who, like myself, an exile in a strange land, is subjected to sufferings and contumelies, which the bravest spirits may find hard to bear. Any man may combat misery; but even the most intrepid will shrink from insult. This, I believe, is the sum of the story. Its resemblance, in some points, to my own, affected me; and," added he, looking gratefully at lady Sara, and timidly towards Miss Beaufort; "if these ladies have sympathised with emotions, against which I strove, but could not entirely conceal, I owe to it, the sweetest consolation, that is now in the power of fate to bestow!"

"Poor Constantine!" cried Maria Egerton, patting his head with one hand, whilst with the other she wiped a tear from her always smiling eye, "forgive me, if I have hurt you. I like you vastly,

though I must now and then laugh at you; you know I hate dismals; so let this tune enliven us all!" and, flying to her piano, she played and sung two or three merry airs, till the countess commanded her to the supper-table.

At this most sociable repast of the whole day, cheerfulness seemed again to disperse the gloom, which threatened the circle. Thaddeus set the example. His unrestrained and elegant conversation acquired new pathos from the anguish, that was driven back to his heart; like the beds of water, which infuse their own nature with the current, his hidden grief imparted an undescribable interest and charm to all his sentiments and actions.

Mary now beheld him in his real character. Unmolested by the haughty presence of Miss Dundas, he became unreserved, intelligent, and enchanting. He was master of every subject; and discoursed on all with a grace, which corroborated her *waking visions*, that he was as some *archangel ruined*.

With the increase of Miss Beaufort's admiration of the count's fine talents, she gradually lost the recollection of what had occupied her mind relative to lady Sara; and her own beautiful countenance, dilating into confidence and delight, the evening passed away with pleasure, until the little party separated for their several homes.

Lady Tinemouth and Maria were fascinated by the lovely Miss Beaufort. Miss Beaufort was equally pleased with the countess and her friend; but when she thought on Thaddeus, she was surprised, interested, charmed.

Lady Sara Roos's reflections were not less flattering: she dwelt with redoubled passion on that look

from the count's eyes, that touch of his hand, which she thought were signs of a reciprocal flame. Both actions were forgotten by him the moment after they were committed; yet he was not ungrateful; but whilst he acknowledged her attentions, and assented to the loveliness of her form, he saw that she would lead him to the brink of a precipice, where, if he fell, he must sink to a depth, never to rise again.

He sought a refuge from such dangerous meditation, in the idea of the ingenuous Mary, on whose modest countenance virtue seemed to have '*set her seal.*' Whilst recollecting the pitying kindness of her voice and looks, his heart owned the empire of purity; and, in the contemplation of her unaffected excellence, he soon forgot the witcheries of lady Sara, and her love.

CHAP. IV.

NEXT morning, when Thaddeus, according to custom, approached the general's bed to give him his coffee, he found him feverish, and his intellects more than usually unsettled.

The count awaited with anxiety the arrival of the benevolent Cavendish, whom he expected; and when he appeared, he declared his increased alarm. Dr. Cavendish having felt the patient's pulse, expressed a wish that he could be induced to take a little exercise. Thaddeus had often urged this necessity to his friend; and having met with constant refusals, he hopelessly repeated the entreaty now; when to his surprise and satisfaction, the old man instantly consented.

Having seen him comfortably dressed, (for the count attended to these *minutiæ* with the care of a son) the doctor said, that they must ride with him to Hyde Park, where he would put them out to walk, until he had performed a visit to a sick person in Piccadilly, after which, he would return, and take them home.

The general not only expressed pleasure at the drive, but as the air was warm and balmy, (it being about the beginning of June,) made no objection to the proposed walk.

He admired the Park, the Serpentine River, the cottage on its bank, and seemed highly diverted by the horsemen and carriages in the ring.. The pertinency of his remarks afforded Thaddeus a ray of hope, that his senses had not entirely lost their union with reason; and he was contemplating,

with awakened confidence, what might be the happy effects of constant exercise, when the general's complaints of weariness obliged him to stop near Piccadilly gate, and await the arrival of the doctor's coach.

He was standing against the railing, supporting Butzou; and, with his hat in his hand, was shading his friend's face from the sun, when two or three carriages driving in, he met the eyes of Miss Euphemia Dundas; who, pulling the check-string, exclaimed, "Bless me, Mr. Constantine! who expected to see you here? Why your note told us, that you were confined with a sick friend."

Thaddeus bowed to her, and still sustaining the debilitated frame of the general on his arm, advanced to the side of the coach. Miss Beaufort, who now looked out, expressed her hope that his invalid was better.

"This is the friend I mentioned," said the count, turning his eyes on the mild features of Butzou; "his physician having ordered him to walk, I accompanied him hither."

"Dear me! how ill you look, Sir," cried Euphemia, addressing the poor invalid; "but you are attended by a kind friend."

"My dear lord!" exclaimed the old man, not regarding what she said, "I must go home; I am tired; pray call the carriage."

Euphemia was again opening her mouth to speak, but Miss Beaufort, perceiving a look of distress in the expressive features of Mr. Constantine, interrupted her by saying, "Good morning, Mr. Constantine; I know that we detain you, and oppress that gentleman, whose pardon we ought to beg." She bowed her head to the general; whose white

hairs were blowing about his face, as he attempted to pull the count towards the pathway.

"My friend cannot thank you, kind Miss Beaufort," cried Thaddeus with a look of gratitude, that made her blush, "but I do from my heart!"

"Here it is! Pray, my lord, come along!" cried Butzou: Thaddeus, seeing that his information was right, bowed to the ladies, and their carriage drove off.

Though the wheels of lady Dundas's coach rolled away from the retreating figures of Thaddeus and his friend, the images of both occupied the meditations of Euphemia and Miss Beaufort, whilst *tête-à-tête*, and in silence, they made the circuit of the Park.

When the carriage again passed the spot on which the subject of their thoughts had stood, Mary, almost mechanically, looked out of the window towards the gate.

"Is he gone yet?" asked Euphemia, sighing deeply.

Mary drew in her head, with the quickness of conscious guilt; and, whilst a colour stained her face, which of itself might have betrayed her prevarication, she asked, "Who?"

"Mr. Constantine," replied Euphemia, with a second sigh. "Did you remark, Mary, how gracefully he supported that sick old gentleman? Was it not the personification of Youth upholding the fainting steps of Age? He put me in mind of the charming young prince, whose name I forget, leading the old Belisarius."

"You are an enthusiast, Euphemia!" returned Mary, striving to smile, and wondering within herself, what could be the meaning of the appellations, with which the old man had addressed Thaddeus.

"So all tell me," replied Euphemia; "so all say, who neither possess the sensibility nor the candour to allow, that great merit may exist without being associated with great rank. Yet," cried the little beauty, in a more animated tone, "I have my doubts, Mary, of his being what he seems. Did you observe the sick gentleman call him *my lord?*"

"I did," returned Mary, "and I was not surprised. Such manners as Mr. Constantine's are not to be acquired in a cottage."

"Dear, dear Mary," cried Euphemia, flinging her ivory arms round her neck; "how I love you for these words! you are generous, you think nobly, and I will no longer hesitate to—to—" and breaking off, she hid her head in Miss Beaufort's bosom.

Mary's heart throbbed, her cheeks grew pale, and, almost unconsciously, she wished to stop the tide of Miss Dundas's confidence.

"Dear Euphemia," answered she, "your regard for this interesting exile is very praise-worthy. But beware of——" she hesitated; a remorseful twitch in her own breast stayed the warning that was rising to her tongue; and blushing at a motive, which she could not at the instant assign to friendship, selfishness, or envy, she touched the cheek of Euphemia with her quivering lips.

Euphemia had finished the sentence for her, and raising her head, exclaimed—"What should I fear in esteeming Mr. Constantine? Is he not the most captivating creature in the world? And for his beauty! Oh, Mary, he is so beautiful, that when the library is filled with the handsomest men in town, the moment Constantine enters, their

reign is over. I compare them with his godlike figure, and I feel as one looking at the sun ; all other objects appear dim and shapeless."

"I hope," returned Mary, rubbing her forehead with her hand, her head beginning to ache strangely, "that Mr. Constantine does not owe your friendship to his fine person ? I think that his mental qualities are more deserving of such a gift."

"Don't look so severe, dear Mary !" cried Miss Dundas, observing that she cast down her eyes, with a contracting brow ; "are you displeased with me ?"

"Mary's displeasure was at the austerity of her own words, and not at her auditor. Raising her eyes with a smile, both in them, and on her lips, she said, "I do not mean, my dear girl, to be severe ; but I would wish, for the honour of my sex, that the objects which attract either our love or our compassion should have something more precious than mere exterior beauty, to engage our interest."

"Well, I will soon be satisfied !" cried Euphemia, in a gayer tone, as they drove through Grosvenor-gate ; "we all know that Constantine is sensible and accomplished : he writes poetry like an angel, both in French and Italian ; I have hundreds of mottos composed by him ; one of them, Mary, is on the work-box I gave you yesterday ; and, what is more, I will ask him to-morrow, why that old gentleman called him *my lord ?* If he be a lord !" exclaimed she.

"What then ?" inquired the eloquent eyes of Mary.

"Don't look so impertinent, my dear," cried the now animated beauty, "I positively won't say another word to you to-day."

Miss Beaufort's head-ache became so painful, that she rejoiced when Euphemia ceased, and the carriage drew up to lady Dundas's door.

A night of almost unremitted sleep performed such good effects on the frame and intellects of general Butzou, that the ever-anxious Thaddeus received with pleasure the opinion of doctor Cavendish, who thought that his patient was sufficiently better, to inspire him with hopes of the best consequences, from a constant repetition of air and exercise. Accordingly, after the ride and walk had been repeated the following day, the count left his friend to his maps and little Nanny, and once more took the way to Harley-street.

He found only Miss Dundas and her sister in the study. Mary (against her will, which she opposed because it was her will,) went out a shopping with Miss Dorothy Somerset and lady Dundas.

Miss Dundas left the room the moment she finished her lessons.

Euphemia, delighted at being *tete-a-tete* with Thaddeus, forgot that she was to act the fascinating character of Madame d'Arblay's heroine; and, shutting her book the instant Diana disappeared, all at once opened her attack on his confidence.

To the eager questions, which the few words of the general had excited, the count afforded no other reply, than the information, that his poor friend knew not what he said, having been a long time in a state of mental derangement.

This explanation caused a momentary mortification in the fanciful Euphemia; but, as it was a property of her mind to erect a new airy castle,

immediately on the sinking of the old, she soon rallied, and embraced the supposition, that "he might be a duke, which was more than a lord!" At any rate, let him be what he would, he charmed her, and had much ado to parry the increasing boldness of her speeches, without letting her see that they were understood.

"You are very diffident, Constantine;" cried she, looking down. "If I consider you worthy of my friendship, why should *you* make disqualifying assertions?"

"Every man, madam," returned Thaddeus, bowing as he rose from his chair, "must be diffident of deserving the honour of your notice."

"There is no man living," replied she, blushing, "to whom I would offer my friendship but yourself."

Thaddeus bit his lip; he knew not what to answer; bowing a second time, he stretched out his hand, and drew his hat towards him. Euphemia's eyes followed the movement.

"You are in a prodigious haste, Mr. Constantine!"

"I know I intrude, madam; and I have promised to be with my sick friend at an early hour."

"Well, you may go, since you are obliged;" returned the pretty Euphemia, rising and smiling sweetly as she laid one hand on his arm, and put the other into her tucker: she drew out a little white leather *souvenir*, marked on the back, in gold letters, with the words '*Toujour cher*,' and slipping it into his hand, "There, receive that, Constantine; and retain it as the first pledge of Euphemia Dundas's friendship."

Thaddeus coloured as he took it; and again having recourse to the convenient reply of a bow, left the room, quite discomposed with vexation.

There was an indelicacy in this absolutely wooing conduct of Miss Euphemia, which, notwithstanding her beauty, and the softness that was its vehicle, struck him with the deepest disgust. He could not trace real affection either in her words or manner; and that any woman, instigated by a mere whim, should lay aside the decent reserves of her sex, and actually court his regard, surprised, whilst it impelled him to loathe her.

They who adopt Euphemia's sentiments are little aware of the conclusion which society infer from such intemperate behaviour. That mistaken creature, who, either at the impulse of her own disposition, or the mandates of example, is induced to despise the guard of modesty, literally '*forsakes the guide of her youth*,' and leaves herself open to every attack which man can devise against her. By levelling the barrier raised by nature, she herself exposes the strong hold of virtue; and may find, too late for recovery, that what modesty has abandoned, is not long held by honour.

Euphemia's affected attachment suggested to the count a few unpleasant recollections respecting the fervent and unequivocal passion of lady Sara. Though guilty, it sprung from a head-long ardour of disposition, which formed at once the error and its palliation. He saw that love was not welcomed by her, (at least he thought so,) as a play-thing, but struggled against, as with a foe; he had witnessed her tortures, he pitied them; and, to render her happy, would gladly have made any sacrifice short of his conscience. Too well assured of being all the world to lady Sara, the belief that Miss Euphemia liked him only from idleness, caprice, and contradiction, caused him to repay her overtures with decided contempt.

When he arrived at home, he threw the pocket-book, whose unambiguous motto made him laugh at her and himself, into a drawer; and looking round his humble room, whose wicker chairs, oil-clothed floor, and uncurtained windows, announced any thing but splendour: "Poor Euphemia!" thought he, "how would you be dismayed, were the indigent Constantine really to take you at your word, and bring you home to such a cheerless habitation!"

The repetition of the late scene, which was communicated to Miss Beaufort from Euphemia failed in producing a similar effect on her.

Mary could discover no reason why the old gentleman's mental derangement should dignify his friend with titles he had never borne. She remarked that his answer to Euphemia was evasive; she remembered his emotion and apology on seeing Mr. C. Kemble in *Adelbert*; and uniting with these facts, his manners and acquirements, so far beyond the charges of vulgar education, she could retain no doubt of his being at least well-born.

This mysterious Constantine occupied her hourly thoughts during the space of two months; in which time, she had full opportunity to learn much of a character, with whom she associated almost every day. At lady Tinemouth's, (one of whose evening guests she frequently became,) she beheld him disencumbered of that armour of reserve, which was his best repellent, in the rude attacks, which always met him in Harley-street.

At the house of the countess, Mary saw him welcomed like an idolized being, before whose cheering influence all frowns and clouds must disappear. When he entered, the smile resumed its seat on the languid features of lady Tinemouth; Miss

Egerton's eye lighted up to keener archness; lady Sara's voluptuous orbs floated in pleasure; and for Mary herself, her breast heaved, her cheeks glowed, her hands trembled, a quick sigh escaped her bosom; and whilst she remained in his presence, she believed that happiness had lost its usual evanescent property, and had become tangible, to hold and press upon the heart.

Mary, who investigated the cause of these tremours on her pillow, bedewed it with delicious though bitter tears, when her alarmed soul whispered, that she nourished for this amiable foreigner, '*a something than friendship dearer.*'

"Ah! is it to come to this?" cried she, pressing down her saturated eye-lids with her hand, "am I at last to love a man, who never perhaps casts a thought on me? How despicable shall I become in my own eyes!"

The pride of woman puts this charge to her taken heart: that heart, which seems tempered of the purest clay, and warmed with the fire of Heaven; that tender and disinterested heart makes, as its appeal—What is love? Is it not an admiration of all that is beautiful in nature and morality? Is it not an union of loveliness with truth? Is it not a passion, whose sole object is the rapture of contemplating the supreme beauty of this combined character?

"Where, then," cried the enthusiastic Mary, wiping the tears from her cheek, "where is the shame that can be annexed to my loving Constantine? If it be honourable to love delineated excellence, it must be equally so, to love it when embodied in a human shape. Such it is in Constantine; and if love be the reflected light of virtue, I may cease to arraign myself of what I otherwise

would have scorned. Therefore, Constantine," cried she, raising her clasped hands, whilst renewed tears streamed over her face, " I will love thee! I will pray for thy happiness, though its partner should be Euphemia Dundas."

Mary's eager imagination would not allow her to perceive those obstacles, in the shapes of pride and prudence, which would stand in the way of his obtaining Euphemia's hand ; its light shewed to her only a rival, in the person of the little beauty ; from whose direct confidence she afterwards retreated with abhorrence.

Had Euphemia been more deserving of Constantine, Miss Beaufort believed that she would have been less reluctant to hear that she also loved him. But Mary could not avoid seeing, that Miss E. Dundas possessed little to ensure comfort, if mere beauty and accidental flights of good-humour were not admitted into the scale. She was weak in understanding, timid of principle, absurd in almost every opinion she adopted ; and, as for love, true, dignified, respectable love, she knew nothing of the passion.

Whilst Miss Beaufort meditated on this meagre schedule of her rival's merits, the probability that even such a man as Constantine might sacrifice himself to flattery and splendour, stung her to the soul.

The more she reflected on it, the more she conceived it likely. Euphemia was considered a beauty of the day ; her affectation of refined prettinesses pleased many, and might charm Constantine : she was mistress of fifty thousand pounds ; and did not esteem it necessary to conceal from her favourite the empire which he had acquired. Per-

haps there was generosity in this openness. If so, what might it not effect on a grateful disposition? Or rather, (her mortified heart murmured in the words of her aunt Dorothy;) how might it not operate on the mind of one of that sex, which, at the best, is as often moved by caprice as sentiment!

Mary blushed at her application of this opinion; and, angry with herself for the injustice, which a lurking jealousy induced her to throw on Constantine's noble nature, she resolved, whatever might be her struggles, to promote his happiness to the utmost of her power.

The next morning, when Miss Beaufort opened the study-door, she found Mr. Constantine at his station, literally baited between Miss Dundas and her honourable lover. At such moments, Mary appeared the kindest of the kind. She loved to see Constantine smile; and, whenever she could produce that effect, by turning the spleen of these polite sneerers against themselves, his smiles, which entered her heart, afforded her a banquet, for hours after his departure.

Mary drew out her netting, (which was a purse for lady Tinemouth) and, taking a seat beside Thaddeus, strove, along with Euphemia, to occupy his attention entirely, that he might not catch even one of those insolent glances, which were passing from Lascelles and a new ally, whom he had obtained in the pretty lady Villiers.

This lady seemed to take extreme pleasure in accosting Thaddeus by the appellation of "friend, my good man, Mr. what's your name?" and similar squibs of insult, with which the prosperous assail the unfortunate. Such random shots often inflict the most galling wounds.

However, *friend*, *my good man*, and *Mr. what's your name*, disappointed this lady's small artillery of effect. He seemed invulnerable, both to her insolence, and to her affectation ; for, to be thought charming, by even Miss Dundas's contemned tutor, was not to be despised ; though, at the very moment in which she desired his admiration, she supposed that her haughtiness had impressed him with a proper sense of his own meanness, and a high conception of her dignity.

She jumped about the room ; assumed infantine airs, played with Euphemia's lap-dog, fondled it, seated herself on the floor, and swept the carpet with her fine flaxen tresses ; but she performed the routine of captivation in vain. Thaddeus recollected having seen this pretty full-grown baby, in her peculiar character, of a profligate wife, pawning her own and her husband's property ; he remembered this, and the united shafts of her charms and folly fell unnoticed to the ground.

When Thaddeus took his leave, Miss Beaufort, as was her custom, retired for an hour to read in her dressing room, before she directed her attention to the toilet. She opened a book, and ran over a few pages of De Stael's Treatise on the passions ; but such reasoning was too abstracted for her present frame of mind, and she threw the volume down.

She dipped a pen in the ink-stand. Being a letter in debt to her guardian, she thought she could defray it now. She accomplished " Dear Sir," and stopped. Whilst she rested on her elbow, and heedless of what she was doing, bit the feather of her quill to pieces, no other idea offered itself than the figure of Thaddeus, sitting ' *severe in youthful beauty !*' She saw him surrounded by those con-

tumelies, which the unworthy bestow on the merit, they can neither emulate nor overlook.

Uneasy with herself, she pushed the table away; and leaning her cheek on her arm, gazed into the rainbow varieties of a beau-pot of flowers, which occupied the fire-place. Even their gay colours appeared to fade before her sight, and present to her vacant eye the form of Thaddeus, with the melancholy air which shaded his movements. She turned round, but could not disengage herself from the spirit that was within her; his half-suppressed sighs seemed yet to thrill in her ear, and weigh upon her heart.

"Incomparable young man!" cried she, starting up, "why art thou so wretched? O! lady Tinemouth, why have you told me so much of his virtue? Why have I convinced myself, that what you said is true? Oh! why was I formed to love an excellence which I never can approach?"

The natural reply to these self demanded questions suggesting itself, she assented with a tear to the whisperings of her heart, that when philosophy would banish the affections, it is incapable of filling their place.

She rung the bell for her maid.

"Marshall, who dines with lady Dundas to-day?"

"I believe, ma'am," replied the girl, "Mr. Lascelles, lady Villiers, and the marquis of Elesmere."

"I detest them all three!" cried Mary, with a petulance to which she was little liable; "dress me how you like, I am indifferent to my appearance."

Marshall obeyed the commands of her lady, who bent her eyes on a little volume of poems written by Egerton Brydges, until her maid, having fixed

the last pearl comb in her beautiful hair, exclaimed, "Dear ma'am, you are so pale to-day! shall I put on the least bit of rouge?"

"No," returned Mary, glancing a look over her languid features, "no, Marshall, I appear as well as I desire. Any chance of passing unnoticed in company I despise, is worth retaining. No one will be here this evening whom I care to please."

She was mistaken; other company had been invited besides those whom the maid mentioned; and Miss Beaufort continued from seven o'clock until ten, the period at which the ladies left the table, annoyed to death by the insipid and pert compliments of the men.

Sick of their subjectless and dragging conversation, she gladly followed lady Dundas to the drawing-room; where, opening her netting-case, she took her station beneath one of the lustres in a remote corner, hoping to find a retreat from the ceaseless nonsense of her ladyship's guests.

After half an hour had elapsed, the gentlemen from below, recruited by fresh company, thronged in fast; and notwithstanding it was styled a family party, Miss Beaufort saw many strange faces, amongst whom she observed an elderly clergyman, who was looking about for a chair. The yawning Lascelles threw himself along the only vacant sofa, just as the gentleman approached it.

Miss Beaufort immediately resigned her place, and was moving on to another room, when the coxcomb springing up, begged permission to admire her work; and taking it from her, pursued her, twisting the purse into a rope round his fingers, declaring how pretty it was, whilst he thrust, (in his own opinion,) his prettier hand before her eyes.

Mary walked forward, smiling with contempt, until they reached the painted saloon, where the Miss Dundas's were closely engaged in conversation with the marquis of Elesmere.

Lascelles, who trembled for his Golconda, at this sight stepped briskly up. Miss Beaufort, who did not wish to lose sight of her purse whilst in the power of such a *Lothario*, followed him, and placed herself against the arm of the sofa on which Euphemia sat.

Lascelles now bowed his scented locks to Diana in vain. Lord Elesmere was describing the last heat at Newmarket, and the attention of neither lady could be withdrawn.

The beau became so irritated by the neglect of Euphemia, and so nettled at her sister's overlooking him, that, assuming a gay air, he struck Miss Dundas's arm a smart stroke with Miss Beaufort's purse ; and laughing, to shew the strong opposition between his broad white teeth, and the miserable mouth of his lordly rival, hoped to alarm him by his familiarity, and to obtain a triumph over the ladies, by degrading them in the eyes of the peer.

" Miss Dundas," demanded he, " who the devil was that your sister walked with the other day in Portland Place ?"

" Me !" cried Euphemia, surprised.

" Aye," returned he ; " I was crossing from Weymouth-street, when I perceived you accost a strange looking man. You may remember you sauntered with him as far as Sir William Miller's. I would have joined you ; but seeing the family standing in the balcony, I did not choose them to suppose, that perhaps *I* had brought you into such low company."

"Who was it, Euphemia?" inquired Miss Dundas in a severe tone.

"I wonder he affects to be ignorant," answered her sister, angrily, "he knows very well, it was only Mr. Constantine."

"And who is Mr. Constantine?" demanded the marquis. Mr. Lascelles shrugged his shoulders.

"E'faith, my lord! a fellow whom nobody knows; a teacher of languages, giving himself the airs of a prince. A writer of poetry; and a man who will draw you, your house, and dogs, if you will pay him for it."

Mary's heart swelled.

"What, a French emigrant?" drawled his lordship, dropping his lip; "and the lovely Euphemia wishes to sooth his sorrows."

"No, my lord," stammered Euphemia, "he is—he is——"

"What!" interrupted Lascelles, with a malicious grin, "a wandering beggar; who thrusts himself into a society, which may some day repay his insolence with chastisement! And for the people who encourage him, they had better beware of being themselves driven from all good company. Such confounders of degrees ought to be degraded from the rank, which they disgrace. I understand, that his chief protectress, is lady Tinemouth; and, by way of an auxiliary, lady Sara Roos evinces, that she is not quite inconsolable at the absence of her husband."

Mary, pale and trembling at the scandal which his last words insinuated, opened her lips to speak, when Miss Dundas (whose angry eyes darted from her sister to her lover) exclaimed, "Mr. Lascelles, I know not what you mean. The subject you have taken up is below my discussion; yet, I must con-

fess, if Euphemia ever have disgraced herself so far as to be seen walking with a school-master, she deserves all you have said."

"And why might I not walk with him, sister?" asked the poor culprit, suddenly recovering from her confusion, and looking pertly up, "who knew that he was not a gentleman?"

"Every body, ma'am," interrupted Lascelles; "and when a young woman of fashion condescends to be seen equalizing herself with a creature depending on his wits for support, she is very likely to incur the contempt of her acquaintance, and the censure of her friends."

"She is, Sir," said Mary, holding down her indignant heart, and forcing her countenance to appear serene; "for she ought to know, that those men of fashion, who have no wits, either to be their support or ornament, if they did not proscribe talents from their circle, must soon find '*the greater glory dim the less.*'

"True, madam," cried lord Berrington, who, having entered during the contest, stood unobserved until this moment; "and that gold and title will prove mere dross and bubble when struck by the Ithuriel touch of Genius."

Mary turned round at the sound of his philanthropic voice, and gave him one of those glances which go immediately to the soul.

"Come, Miss Beaufort," cried he, taking her hand, "I see the young musician yonder, who has so recently astonished the public. I believe he is going to sing. Let us leave this discordant corner, and seek harmony by his side."

Mary obeyed the impulse of his arm, and seating herself a few paces off the musical party, Berrington took his station behind her chair.

When the finest and most melting voice in the world had ceased the last stanza of '*From shades of night*,' Mary's eyes, full of admiration, and transport, which rapid association rendered more intense, remained fixed on the singer. Lord Berrington smiled at the vivid expression of her countenance; and, as the inimitable Braham moved from the instrument, exclaimed, "Come, come, Miss Beaufort, I won't allow that Orphean boy to run away with all your attention; listen to my merits. Do you know, if it were not for my timely lectures, little Lascelles would grow the most insufferable gossip about town? There is not a match, nor a divorce, near St. James's, of which he cannot repeat all the whys and wherefores. I call him Sir Benjamin Backbite; and I believe he hates me worse than the devil."

"Such a man's dislike," rejoined Mary, "is the highest encomium he can bestow. I never yet heard him speak well of a person who did not resemble himself."

"And he is not consistent even there," resumed the viscount; "I am not sure that I have always heard him speak in the gentlest terms of Miss Dundas. Yet, on this topic, I cannot quite blame him; for, on my honour, she provokes me beyond any woman I know."

"Many women," replied Mary, smiling, "would esteem that a flattering instance of power."

"And, like every thing that flatters," returned he, "it would tell a falsehood. A shrew can provoke the man who detests her. And for Miss Dundas," continued he, "notwithstanding her parade of learning, her judgment has not been taught to decide rightly; consequently she gener-

ally espouses the wrong side of the argument; and I may say, with somebody whose name I have forgotten, that any one who knows Diana Dundas never need be at a loss for a woman to call *impertinent*."

"You are not usually so severe, my lord!"

"I am not usually so sincere, Miss Beaufort," answered he, "but I see that you think for yourself; therefore I make no hesitation in speaking what *I* think—to you."

His auditor bowed her head. Lady Dundas at that moment beckoned him across the room. Her ladyship compelled him to sit down to whist. He cast a rueful glance at Mary, and took a seat opposite to his costly partner.

"Lord Berrington is a very worthy young man," observed the clergyman, to whom Miss Beaufort, at the beginning of the evening, had resigned her chair; "I presume, madam, that you have been honouring him with your conversation."

"Yes," returned Mary, noticing the benign countenance of the venerable speaker; "I have not had the pleasure of long knowing his lordship; but what I have seen of his character is highly to his advantage."

"I was intimate in his father's house for years," rejoined the gentleman; "I knew this young nobleman from a boy. If he have faults, he owes them to his mother, who doated on him, and rather directed his care to the adornment of a really handsome person, than to the cultivation of talents, which he has since learned to appreciate."

"I believe lord Berrington to be very sensible, and, above all, very humane," returned Miss Beaufort.

"He is so," replied the old gentleman; "yet it was not till he had attained the age of twenty-two, that he appeared to know, that he had any thing to do in the world, besides dressing and attending on the fair. His taste produced the first, whilst the urbanity of his disposition gave birth to the latter. When Berrington arrived at his title, he was about five-and-twenty. Sorrow for the death of his amiable parents, who died in the same month, afforded him leisure to find his reason. He discovered that he had been acting a part beneath him; and he soon implanted on the old stock those excellent acquirements of the mind which you see he possesses. In spite of this regeneration," continued he, casting a good-humoured glance on the dove-coloured silk stockings, breeches, and waistcoat of the viscount; "you perceive that first impressions will remain. He loves dress, but he loves justice and philanthropy better."

"This eulogy, Sir," said Mary, "affords me real pleasure. May I know the name of the gentleman with whom I have the honour to converse?"

"My name is Blackmore," returned he.

"Dr. Blackmore?"

"The same."

He was the same Dr. Blackmore, who had been struck by the appearance of the count Sobieski at the Hummums; and who, being a rare visitor at lady Dundas's, had never, by any chance, met a second time with the object of his compassion.

"I am happy," resumed Miss Beaufort, "in having the good fortune to meet a gentleman, of whom I have so frequently heard my guardian express sentiments of esteem."

"Ah!" replied he, "I have not seen him since the death of his lady; I hope that he and his son are well?"

"Perfectly," returned she.

"You, Madam, I suppose, are my lady's niece, Miss Beaufort?"

"I am, Sir."

"Well, I rejoice at this incident," rejoined he, pressing her hand; "I knew your mother when she was a lovely girl. She used to spend her summers with the late lady Somerset, then Miss Beaufort, at the castle. It was there that I had the honour of cultivating her friendship."

"I do not remember ever having seen my mother," replied the now thoughtful Mary. Dr. Blackmore, observing the expression of her countenance, smiled kindly, and said, "I fear I am to blame here. This is a sad way of beginning an acquaintance to which I introduced myself. But your goodness must pardon me," continued he, "for I have so long accustomed myself to speak what I think to those whom I love, that sometimes, as in this case, I undesignedly inflict pain."

"Not in this case," returned Miss Beaufort; "I am always pleased when listening to a friend of my mother; and particularly so, when he speaks in her praise."

The breaking up of the card tables prevented any further conversation; and Lord Berrington again approaching the sofa where she sat, exclaimed, as he perceived her companion, "Ah! my good doctor; what, you have presented yourself at this fair shrine? I declare, you eccentric folk may dare any thing. Whilst you are free, Miss Beaufort," added he, turning to her, "adopt this

bit of advice, which a good lady once gave me, and which I have implicitly followed, ' When you are young get the character of an oddity, and it seats you in an easy chair for life."

Mary was interrupted in her reply by a general stir amongst the company ; who, now that cards were over, like bees and wasps, were swarming about the room, gathering and stinging as they went.

At two the house was cleared ; and Miss Beaufort, exhausted, threw herself on her pillow, to think, and dream of Thaddeus.

CHAP. V.

If it be true what the vivid imagination of poets have often asserted, that, when the soul dreams, it is in the actual presence of those beings whose images present themselves to their slumbers, then have the spirits of Thaddeus and Mary been commingled at the hour of midnight; then has the young Sobieski again visited his distant country; again seen it victorious; again knelt before his sainted parents.

From such visions as these did Thaddeus awake in the morning, after having spent the preceding evening with lady Tinemouth.

He had walked with her ladyship in Hyde-Park till a late hour. By the mild light of the moon, which shone brightly through the still, balmy air of a mid-summer night, they took their way twice along the shadowy bank of the Serpentine.

There is a solemn appeal to the soul in the repose of nature, that "makes itself be felt." No syllable from either Thaddeus or the countess broke the universal silence. Thaddeus looked around, on the clear expanse of the water overshaded by the long reflexion of the deepening woods: then raising his eyes to that beautiful planet, which has excited the tenderest thoughts in every sympathetic breast, since the beginning of the world; he drew a deep sigh. The countess echoed it.

"In such a night as this," said Thaddeus, in a low voice, as if afraid to disturb the sleeping deity of the place, "I used to walk the ramparts of Villa-

now, with my dear departed mother, and gaze on that lovely orb: when I was far distant from her, I have looked at it from the door of my tent, and, fancying that her eyes were then fixed on the same object with my own, I found happiness in the idea."

A tear stole down the cheek of Thaddeus. That moon yet shone brightly; but his mother's eyes were closed in the grave.

"Villanow!" repeated the countess in a tone of surprise, "surely, that was the seat of the celebrated palatine of Masovia! You have discovered yourself, Constantine! I am much mistaken, if you be not his grandson, the far-famed Thaddeus Sobieski?"

Thaddeus had allowed the remembrances pressing on his mind to draw him into a speech, which he found had disclosed to the quick apprehension of the countess, what his pride would forever have concealed.

"I have indeed betrayed my secret;" cried he, incapable of denying it; "but, dear lady Tinemouth, as you value my feelings, never let it escape your lips. Having long considered you as my best friend, loved you as a parent, I forgot in the recollection of my beloved mother, now no more, that I had withheld any of my history from you."

"Gracious Providence!" exclaimed her ladyship, after a moment's pause, in which ten thousand admiring and pitying reflections thronged on her mind, "Is it possible? Can it be the count Sobieski, that brave and illustrious youth, of whom every foreigner spoke with wonder? Can it be him, that I behold in the poor unfriended Constantine?"

"Even so," returned Thaddeus, pressing her hand; "my country is no more. I am now forgotten by the world, as I have been by fortune. I

have nothing to do on the earth, but to fulfil the few duties which friendship has enjoined; and then, it will be indifferent to me how soon I am laid in its bosom."

"You are too young, dear Constantine, (for I am yet to call you by that name,) to despair of happiness being reserved for you."

"No, my dear lady Tinemouth, I do not cheat myself with such hope; I am not so importunate with the gracious Being who gave me life and reason. He bestowed upon me for a while, the tenderest connexions; friends, rank, honours, glory, all these were crushed in the fall of Poland; yet I survive. I seek resignation only, and I have found it: it cost me many a struggle; but the contest was due to the decrees of that all-wise Creator, who gave my first years to happiness."

"Inestimable young man;" cried the countess, wiping the flowing tears from her eyes, "you teach misfortune dignity! Not when all Warsaw rose in a body to thank you, as one of its bravest deliverers; not when the king received you in the senate with open arms; could you have appeared to me so worthy of admiration, as at this moment, when, conscious of having been all this, you submit to the direct reverse of fate, because you believe it to be the will of your Maker! Ah! little does Miss Beaufort think, when seated by your side, that she is conversing with the very hero whom she has so often wished to see!"

"Miss Beaufort!" echoed Thaddeus, his heart glowing with delight. "Did she ever hear of me by the name of Sobieski!"

"Who has not?" returned the countess, "every heart that could be interested by suffering virtue, has heard, and must well remember the calam-

ities of your country. Whilst the newspapers of the day informed us of the struggles which Poland made for liberty, they noticed amongst the first of her champions, the palatine of Masovia, Kosciuszko, and yourself. Many an evening have I spent with lady Somerset and Mary Beaufort, lamenting the fate of that devoted kingdom."

During this declaration, a variety of transporting emotions agitated the mind of Thaddeus; until recollecting, with a bitter pang, the shameless ingratitude of Pembroke, and the cruel possibility of being recognized by the earl of Tinemouth as his son; he exclaimed, "My dearest madam, I entreat, that what I have revealed to you may never be divulged! Miss Beaufort's friendship would indeed be happiness; but I cannot purchase even so great a bliss, at the expense of principles, which are knit with my life."

"How?" cried the countess, "is not your name, and all its attendant ideas, an honour which the proudest man might boast?"

Thaddeus pressed her ladyship's hand gratefully to his heart.

"You are kind! very kind! Yet I cannot retract. Confide, dear lady Tinemouth, in the justice of my resolution. I could not bear cold pity; I could not bear the heartless comments of people, who, pretending to compassion, would load me with a heavier sense of my calamities. Besides, there are persons in England, who are so much the objects of my aversion, that I would rather die, than let them know that I exist. Therefore, on these grounds, let me implore you to preserve my secret."

Lady Tinemouth saw by the earnestness of his manner, that she ought to comply: and, without

further hesitation, promised all the silence on the subject which he could require.

This long moonlight conversation, by awakening those dormant remembrances, which were cherished, though hidden in his bosom, gave birth to an effort of imagination, that painted within the rapid series of his tumultuous dreams, the images of every being whom he had ever loved, or now continued to regard with interest.

Proceeding next morning towards Harley-street, he mused on what had happened; and pleased that he had, though unpremeditatedly, paid the just compliment of his entire confidence, to the uncommon friendship of the countess; he arrived at lady Dundas's door, before he was sensible of the ground he had passed over; and in a few minutes afterwards was ushered into his accustomed purgatory.

When the servant opened the study door, Miss Euphemia was again alone. Thaddeus recoiled, but he could not retreat.

"Come in, Mr. Constantine," cried the little beauty, in a languid tone; "my sister is gone to the riding school with Mr. Lascelles. Miss Beaufort wanted me to drive out with her and my mother; but I preferred waiting for you."

The count bowed; and, almost retreating with fear, of what might next be said, he gladly heard a thundering knock at the door, and, a moment after, the voice of Miss Dundas ascending the stairs.

He had just opened his books, when she entered followed by her lover. Panting under a heavy riding-habit, she flung herself on a sofa, and began to vilify "the odious heat of Fozard's odious place;" and telling Euphemia that she would

play truant to-day, ordered her to attend to her lessons.

Owing to the warmth of the weather, Thaddeus came out this morning without boots ; and it being the first time that the exquisite proportion of his limb had been seen by any of the present company, excepting Euphemia, Lascelles, bursting with a disdain of such insignificant distinctions, (which he would not call envy) measured the count's fine leg with his insolent eyes ; then, declaring that he was quite in a furnace, took the corner of his glove, and waving it to and fro, half muttered, ' *Come, gentle air.*'

" *The fairer* Lascelles *cries !*" exclaimed Euphemia, looking off her exercise.

" What ! does your master teach you wit ?" drawled the coxcomb, with a particular emphasis.

Thaddeus, affecting not to hear, continued to direct his pupil.

The indefatigable Lascelles having observed the complacence with which the count always regarded Miss Beaufort, determined the goad should fret ; and drawing out of his pocket, the netting, which he had taken the night before from Mary, exclaimed, " 'Fore Heaven, here is my little Beaufort's purse!"

Thaddeus started, and unconsciously looking up, beheld the well-known work of Mary, dangling in the hand of Lascelles. He suffered pangs unknown to him ; his eyes became dim, and hardly knowing what he saw or said, he pursued the lesson with increased rapidity.

The malicious puppy, finding his malice take effect, with a careless air threw his clumsy limbs on the vacant part of the sofa, which Miss Dundas had

quitted to seat herself nearer the window, and cried, in a voice of sudden recollection—

"By the bye, that Miss Mary Beaufort, when she chooses to be sincere, is a staunch little aristocrat."

"You may as well tell me," replied Miss Dundas, with a contemptuous curl of her lip, "that she is the empress of Russia."

"I beg your pardon," cried he, raising his voice at his judgment being doubted; "I will prove it to you. When she gave me this gew-gaw," added he, rumpling the purse in his hand, "she told me an everlasting story about some friend of hers, whose music-master, having mistaken some condescensions on her part, had dared to snatch a kiss from her snowy fingers, as they were flying over the strings of her harp. You cannot imagine how Beaufort's pretty eyes blazed as she related this tale; I verily believe, had it been herself, she would have given poor Tweedledum a flourish across the cheek."

Miss Dundas laughed.

"These energetic young ladies possess not the gentlest passions in the world; and after Miss Beaufort's outrageous sally, last night, upon you, I should not wonder at any indecorum she might commit."

"Outrageous to me!" echoed the fop, dipping the end of the netting into Diana's lavender-bottle, and dabbing his temples, "she was always too civil by half. I hate forward girls."

Thaddeus shut the large dictionary, which lay before him, with a violence, that made the puppy start; and rising hastily from his chair, with a face as red as crimson, was taking up his hat, when the door opened, and Mary appeared.

A white chip hat was resting lightly on the glittering tresses which waved over her forehead; whilst her lace-shade gently discomposed by the air, half veiled, and half revealed, her graceful figure. She entered with a smile, and walking up to the side of the table where Thaddeus was standing, inquired after his friend's health. He answered her in a voice unusually agitated. All that he had been told by the countess of her favourable opinion of him, and the slander he had just heard from Diana's lover, were at once present to his mind.

He was yet speaking, when Miss Beaufort, casually looking towards the other side of the room, saw her purse still acting the part of a handkerchief in the hand of Mr. Lascelles.

"Look, Mr. Constantine," said she, gaily tapping his arm with her parasol, "how the most precious things may be degraded! There is the netting you have so often admired, and which I intended for lady Tinemouth's pocket, debased to do the office of Mr. Lascelles's napkin."

"You gave it to him, Miss Beaufort," cried Miss Dundas; "and, after that, surely he may use it as he values it!"

"If I could have given it to Mr. Lascelles, madam, I should hardly have taken notice of its fate."

Miss Dundas, believing what her lover had advanced, was displeased at Mary for having, by presents, interfered with any of her danglers, and rather angrily replied; "Mr. Lascelles said you gave it to him; and certainly you would not insinuate a word against his veracity."

"No, not *insinuate*," returned Miss Beaufort, "but *affirm*, that he has forgotten his veracity, at least, in this statement."

Lascelles yawned—"Lord bless me, ladies, how you quarrel! You will disturb Monsieur."

"Mr. Constantine," returned Mary, blushing with indignation, "cannot be disturbed by nonsense."

Thaddeus again took his hat; bowing to his lovely champion, with an expression of countenance, which he little suspected had passed from his heart to his eyes, he was preparing to take his leave, when Euphemia requested him to inform her whether she had folded down the right pages for the next exercise. He drew near, and was leaning over her chair to look at the book, when she whispered, "Don't be hurt at what Lascelles says; he is always jealous of any body who is handsomer than himself."

Thaddeus bowed to her with a face of scarlet; for, on meeting the eyes of Mary, he saw that she had heard this intended comforter as well as himself; and, uttering a few incoherent sentences to both ladies, he hurried out of the room.

CHAP. VI.

The count Sobieski was prevented from paying his customary visit next morning, in Harley-street, by the sudden illness of the general, who was struck, at seven o'clock, by a fit of the palsy.

When Dr. Cavendish beheld the poor old man stretched along the bed, and hardly exhibiting signs of life, he pronounced it to be a death-stroke. At this sentence, Thaddeus, turning deadly pale, staggered to a seat, with his eyes fixed on the altered features of his friend. Dr. Cavendish took his hand.

"Recollect yourself, my dear Sir! Happen when it will, his death must be a release. But do not expect it for some time; he may yet linger a week or a fortnight.

"Not in pain, I hope!" said Thaddeus, rising.

"No;" returned the doctor, "probably he will remain as you now see him, and expire like the last glimmer of a dying taper."

The benevolent Cavendish proceeded to give particular directions to Thaddeus and Mrs. Robson, who promised to act as nurse; and then, with regret left the stunned count to the melancholy task of watching by the bed-side of his venerable friend.

Thaddeus now retained no thought that was not rivetted on the emaciated form before him. Whilst the unconscious invalid struggled for respiration, he listened to his short and convulsed breathing, with sensations which seemed to tear the strings of his own breast. Unable to bear it longer, he moved opposite to the fire, and seating himself, with

his pallid face and aching head supported on his arm, which rested on a plain deal table, he remained meeting no other suspension from deep meditation, than the occasional appearance of Mrs. Robson on tiptoes, peeping in, and inquiring whether he wanted any thing.

From this depressing reverie he was aroused next morning at nine o'clock, by the entrance of Dr. Cavendish. Thaddeus seized his hand with the eagerness of anxiety,—" he has not been worse, my dear Sir, may I hope——"

The doctor, not suffering him to finish with what he hoped, shook his head, and waving his hand in sign of the vanity of that hope, advanced to the bed of the general, and felt his pulse. His opinion exactly coincided with what he had declared before, differing only in one particular, that he now saw no absolute threatenings of immediate dissolution.

" Poor Butzou !" said Thaddeus, as the doctor withdrew, putting the general's motionless hand to his quivering lips, " I never will leave thee ! I will watch by thee, thou last relic of my country !"

With anguish at his heart, he wrote a few hasty lines to the countess : Then, addressing Miss Dundas, he offered, as the reason for his late and continued absence, the danger of his friend.

His note found Miss Dundas attended by her constant shadow, Mr. Lascelles, lady Villiers, and two or three more fine ladies and gentlemen ; besides Euphemia and Miss Beaufort, who, with pensive countenances, were waiting the arrival of its writer.

When Miss Dundas took the billet off the silver salver, on which her man presented it, and looked

at the superscription, she threw it into the lap of Lascelles."

"There," cried she, "is an excuse, I suppose, from Mr. Constantine, for his impertinence in not coming hither yesterday. Read it, Lascelles."

"'Fore Gad, I wouldn't touch it for an earldom!" exclaimed the affected puppy, jerking it on the table. "It might infect me with the hypochondriacs. Pray, Phemy, do you peruse it."

Euphemia, in her eagerness to learn what detained Mr. Constantine, neglected the insolence of the request, and hastily breaking the seal, reads as follows:

"Mr. Constantine hopes that a sudden and dangerous disorder, which has attacked the life of a very dear friend with whom he resides, will be a sufficient appeal to the humanity of the Miss Dundases, and obtain their pardon, for his relinquishing the honour of attending them yesterday and to-day."

"Dear me!" cried Euphemia, piteously, "how sorry I am! I dare say, it is that white haired old gentleman whom we saw in the Park. You remember, Mary, he was sick."

"Probably," returned Miss Beaufort, with her eyes fixed on the agitated handwriting of Thaddeus.

"Throw the letter into the street, Phemy!" cried Miss Dundas, affecting sudden terror, "who knows but what it is a fever the man has got, and we may all catch our deaths?"

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Mary, in a voice of real alarm; but it was for Thaddeus, not fear of any infection which the paper might bring to herself.

"Lascelles, take away the filthy scrawl from Phemy. How can you be so headstrong, child?" cried Diana, snatching the letter from her sister, and throwing it out of the window; "I declare, you are sufficient to provoke a saint."

"Then, you may keep your temper, Di," returned Euphemia, with a sneer; "you are far enough from that title."

Miss Dundas made a very angry reply, which was retaliated with another; and a still more noisy and disagreeable altercation might have taken place, had not a good-humoured lad, a brother-in-law of lady Villiers, in hopes of calling off the attention of the sisters, exclaimed, "Bless me, Miss Dundas, your little dog has pulled a folded sheet of paper from under that stand of flowers! Perhaps it may be of consequence!"

"Fly! Take it up, George!" cried lady Villiers; "Esop will tear it to atoms whilst you are asking questions."

After a chace round the room, over chairs, and through tables, George Villiers at length plucked the devoted piece of paper out of the dog's mouth; and, as Miss Beaufort was gathering up her working materials to leave the room, opened it and cried, in a voice of triumph, "By jove! it is a copy of verses!"

"Verses!" demanded Euphemia, feeling in her pocket, and colouring; "let me see them."

"That you sha'n't," roared Lascelles, catching them out of the boy's hand, "if they be your writing, we will have them."

"Help me, Mary!" cried Euphemia, turning to Miss Beaufort: "I know that nobody is a poet in this house, but myself. They must be mine, and I will have them."

"Surely, Mr. Lascelles," said Mary, compassionating the poor girl's anxiety, "you will not be so rude as to detain them from their right owner."

"O! but I will," cried he, mounting on a table, to get out of Euphemia's reach, who now, half crying, tried to snatch at the paper. "Let me alone, Miss Phemy. I will read them; so here goes it."

Miss Dundas laughed at her sister's confused looks, whilst Lascelles prepared to read, in a loud voice, the following verses. They had been hastily scribbled in pencil by Thaddeus, a long time ago. Having put them by mistake, with some other papers, into his pocket, he had dropped them next day, in taking out his handkerchief, at lady Dundas's. Lascelles cleared his throat with three hems, then raising his right hand with a flourish of action, in a very pompous tone, began—

Like one, whom Etna's torrent fires have sent
Far from the land, where his first youth was spent;
Who, inly drooping, on a foreign shore
Broods over scenes which charm his eyes no more:
And while his country's ruin wakes the groan,
Yearns for the buried hut, he call'd his own:
So driv'n, O Poland! from thy ravag'd plains,
So mourning o'er thy sad, but lov'd remains,
A houseless wretch, I wander through the world,
From Friends, from Grandeur, and from Glory hurl'd!
O! not, that each long night my weary eyes
Sink into sleep, unlull'd by pity's sighs;
Not, that in bitter tears my bread is steep'd,
Tears drawn by insults on my sorrows heap'd;
Not, that my thoughts recal a mother's grave;
Recal the sire I would have died to save,
Who fell before me, bleeding on the field,
Whilst I in vain oppos'd the fruitless shield:
Ah! not for these I grieve! Tho' mental wo
More deadly still, scarce fancy's self could know.

O'er want and private griefs the soul can climb,
Virtue subdues the one, the other time;
But, at his country's fall, the patriot feels
A grief, no time, no drug, no reason heals.
Mem'ry! remorseless murderer! whose voice
Kills as it sounds; who never says,—rejoice!
To my deserted heart, by joy forgot,
Thou pale, thou midnight spectre, haunt me not!
Thou dost but point to where sublimely stands
A glorious temple, rear'd by freedom's hands,
Circled with palms and laurels, crown'd with light,
Darting truth's piercing sun on mortal sight:
Then, rushing on, leagu'd fiends of hellish birth
Level the mighty fabric with the earth!
Slept the red bolt of Vengeance in that hour,
When virtuous freedom fell the slave of pow'r!
Slumber'd the God of Justice! that no brand
Blasted, with blazing wing, the impious band!
Dread God of Justice! to thy will I kneel,
Tho' still my filial heart must bleed and feel,
Tho' still the proud convulsive throb will rise,
When fools my country's wrongs and woes despise;
When low-soul'd pomp, vain wealth, that pity gives,
Which virtue ne'er bestows, and ne'er receives,
That pity, stabbing where it vaunts to cure,
Which barbs the dart of want, and makes it sure;
How far remov'd from what the feeling breast
Yields boastless, breath'd in sighs to the distress'd!
Which whispers sympathy, with tender fear,
And almost dreads to pour its balmy tear,—
But such I know not now, unseen, alone,
I heave the heavy sigh, I draw the groan;
And madd'ning, turn to days of liveliest joy,
When o'er my native hills I cast mine eye,
And said exulting, "Free men here shall sow
"The seed, that soon in tossing gold shall glow!
"While plenty, led by liberty, shall rove,
"Gay and rejoicing, through the land they love;
"And, 'mid their loaded vines, the peasant see
"His wife, his children, breathing out—we're free!"
But now, O wretched land! above thy plains,
Half viewless thro' the gloom, vast horror reigns.

No happy peasant, o'er his blazing hearth,
Devotes the supper-hour to love and mirth ;
No flowers on liberty's pure altar bloom ;
Alas ! they wither now, and strew her tomb !
From the great Book of Nations, fiercely rent,
My country's page to Lethe's stream is sent.
But sent in vain ! Th' historic Muse shall raise,
O'er wrong'd Sarmatia's cause, the voice of praise,
Shall sing *her* dauntless on the field of death ;
And blast her royal robbers' bloody wreath !

" It must be Constantine's !" cried Euphemia, in a voice of surprised delight, when the reader finished, and springing up to take the paper out of his hand.

" I dare say it is," answered the ill-natured Lascelles, holding it above his head. " Come, you shall have it ; only first let us hear it again ; it is so mighty pretty, so very lackadaisical !"

" Give it to me !" cried Euphemia, quite angry.

" Don't, Lascelles," exclaimed Miss Dundas ; " the man must be a perfect ideot to write such rhodomontade."

" O ! it is delectable !" returned her lover, opening the paper again ; " it would make a charming ditty ! Come, I will sing it. Shall it be to the tune of *The Babes in the Wood*, or *Chevy Chace*, or *The Beggar of Bethnal Green ?*"

" Unpitying, senseless wretch !" exclaimed Mary, rising from her chair, where she had been striving to subdue those emotions, with which every line in the poem filled her heart.

" Brute !" cried the enraged Euphemia, taking courage at Miss Beaufort's unusual warmth, " I will have the paper."

" You sha'n't," answered the malicious coxcomb ; and rising his arm higher than her reach, he tore it into a hundred pieces.

At this sight, Mary, no longer able to contain herself, rushed out of the room; and hurrying to her own chamber, threw herself upon the bed; where she gave way to a paroxysm of tears, which shook her almost to suffocation.

During the first burst of her indignation, her agitated spirit breathed every appellation of abhorrence and reproach on Lascelles, and his malignant mistress. Then, wiping her flowing eyes, she said, "Yet, can I wonder, when I compare Constantine with what *they* are? The man who dares to be virtuous and great, and to appear so, arms the self-love of all common characters against him."

Such being her meditations, she refused to join the family at dinner; and it was not until evening that she felt herself at all able to treat the ill-natured groupe with decent civility.

The next morning Miss Beaufort, (to avoid spending more hours than were absolutely necessary in the company of a woman whom she now loathed,) borrowed lady Dundas's sedan chair; and, ordering it to lady Tinemouth's, found her ladyship at home, alone, and evidently much discomposed.

"I intrude on you, lady Tinemouth!" said Mary, observing her looks, and withdrawing from the offered seat.

"No, my dear Miss Beaufort," replied her ladyship, when the servant closed the door, "I am glad you are come. I assure you I have few pleasures in solitude. Read that letter," added she, putting one into the hand of Mary, "it has just conveyed one of the cruellest stabs ever offered by a son to the heart of his mother. Read it; and you will not be surprised at finding me in the state you see."

The countess looked on her paralysed hands as she spoke; and Miss Beaufort, taking the paper, sat down, and read to herself the following letter:

"*To the Right Honourable the Countess of Tinemouth.*

"Madam,

"I am commissioned by the earl, my father, to inform you, that if you have lost all regard for your own character, he considers that some respect is due to the mother of his son; therefore he watches your conduct.

"He has been apprised of your frequent meetings, during these many months, in Grosvenor Place, and at other people's houses, with an obscure foreigner, your declared lover. The earl wished to suppose this false, until your shameless behaviour became so flagrant that he esteems it worthy neither of doubt nor indulgence.

"With his own eyes he saw you, four nights ago, alone with this man in Hyde Park. Such demonstration is dreadful. Your proceedings are abominable; and if you do not, without further parley, set off, either to Craighall in Cornwall, or the Wolds, you shall receive a letter from my sister as well as myself, to tell the dishonoured lady Tinemouth, how much she merits her daughter's contempt, added to that of

"HARWOLD."

"And what do you mean to do, my dear madam?" inquired Mary, shocked at an instance, so disgraceful to human nature.

"I will obey my lord and his children," returned the countess, bursting into tears. "My last action shall be in obedience to their will. I cannot live long; and when I am dead, perhaps the

earl's vigilance may be satisfied; perhaps, some kind friend may then plead my cause in my daughter's heart. One cruel line from her would kill me. I will at least avoid the completion of that threat, by leaving town to-morrow night."

"So soon? But I hope not to Cornwall?"

"No," replied her ladyship, "Craighall is too near Plymouth. I determine on the Wolds. Yet, why should I have a choice? It is almost a matter of indifference to what spot I am banished; in what place I am to die: Any where I shall be equally remote from a friend."

Miss Beaufort's heart was oppressed when she entered the room; lady Tinemouth's sorrows seemed to give her a license to weep. She took her ladyship's hand, and, with difficulty, sobbed out this inarticulate offer, "Take me, dear lady Tinemouth! I am sure my guardian will be happy to permit me to be with you, where, and how long you like."

"My dear girl," replied the countess, kissing her wet cheek, "I thank you from my heart; but I cannot take so ungenerous an advantage of your goodness, as to consign your tender nature to the harassing task of attending on sorrow and sickness. How strangely different may even amiable dispositions be tempered! Maria Egerton is better framed for such an office. Kind as she is, the hilarity of her disposition does not allow the sympathy she bestows on others, to injure either her mind or her body."

Mary interrupted her. "I should be grieved, my dear countess, to believe, that my very aptitude to serve my friends, will prove the first reason why I should be denied the pleasure. It is only in scenes of affliction that friendship is tried, and de-

clares its truth. If Miss Egerton were not going with you, I should certainly insist on putting my affection to the ordeal."

"You mistake, my sweet friend," returned her ladyship; "Maria is forbidden to remain any longer with me. You have overlooked the postscript to lord Harwold's letter, else you must have seen the whole of my cruel situation. Turn over the leaf."

Miss Beaufort opened the sheet, and read these few lines; which being written on the interior part of the paper had escaped her sight.

"Go where you will, it is our special injunction, that you leave Miss Egerton behind you: who, we hear, has been the ambassadress in this shocking intrigue. If we learn that you disobey, and persist in such audacity, it shall be worse for you in every respect; as it will convince us, beyond a possibility of doubt, how uniform is the turpitude of your conduct."

Lady Tinemouth grasped Miss Beaufort's hand, as she threw the barbarous scrawl on the table. "And that is from the son for whom I felt all a mother's agonies; all a mother's love! Had he died the first hour in which he saw the light, what a mass of guilt might he not have escaped! It is he," added she, in a lower voice, and looking wildly round, "that breaks my heart. I could have borne his father's perfidy; but, insult, oppression, from my child! Oh, Mary, you know not its bitterness!"

Miss Beaufort could only answer with her tears.

After a pause of near a quarter of an hour, in which the countess strove to tranquillize her spirits, she resumed in a more composed voice.

"Excuse me for an instant, my dear Miss Beaufort; I must write to Mr. Constantine. I have yet to inform him that my absence is to be added to his other misfortunes."

With her eyes raining down upon the paper, she took up a pen; and hastily writing a few lines, was sealing them, when Mary, looking up, hardly conscious of the words which escaped her lips, said, with anguished eagerness, "Lady Tinemouth, you know much of that noble and unhappy young man." Her eye irresolutely, and her cheek glowing, awaited the answer of the countess, who, for a moment, continued to gaze on the letter she held in her hand, as if in profound thought; then all at once raising her head, and regarding the now down-cast face of her lovely friend with tenderness, replied in a tone which conveyed the deep interest of her heart.

"I do, Miss Beaufort. But he has reposed his griefs in my friendship and honour: therefore, I must hold them sacred."

"I will not ask you to betray them;" returned Mary, in a faltering voice, "Yet I cannot help lamenting his sufferings, and esteeming the fortitude with which he supports his fall."

The countess looked stedfastly on her fluctuating countenance. "Has Constantine, my dear girl, insinuated to you, that he ever was otherwise than as he now appears?"

Miss Beaufort could not reply. She would not trust her lips with words; but shook her head in sign that he had not. Lady Tinemouth was too well read in the human heart, to doubt, for an instant, the cause of her question, and consequent emotion. Feeling that something was due to an anxiety so disinterested, she took her passive hand,

and said, "Mary, you have guessed rightly. Though I am not authorized to tell you the real name of Constantine, nor the particulars of his history; yet, let this satisfy your generous heart, that it can never be more honourably employed, than in compassionating calamities, which ought to wreath his young brows with glory."

Miss Beaufort's eyes streamed afresh, whilst her exulting soul seemed ready to rush from her bosom.

"Mary!" continued the countess, warmed by the recollection of his excellence; "You have no need to blush at the interest which you take in this amiable Constantine! Every trial of spirit which could have tortured youth or manhood has been endured by him with the firmness of a hero. Ah, my sweet friend," added the countess, pressing the hand of the confused Miss Beaufort, who, ashamed, and conscious that her behaviour betrayed how dearly she considered him, had covered her face with her handkerchief; "when you are disposed to believe that a man is as great as his titles and demands assert, examine, with a nice observance, whether his pretensions be real or artificial. Imagine him disrobed of splendour, and struggling with the world's inclemencies. If his character cannot stand this ordeal, he is only a pageant of pomp, inflated and garnished; and it is reasonable to punish his arrogance with contempt. But, on the reverse, when, like Constantine, he rises from the ashes of his fortunes, in a brighter blaze of virtue; then, dearest girl," cried the countess, encircling her with her arms, "it is the sweetest privilege of loveliness, to console and bless so rare a being."

Mary raised her deluged face from the bosom of her friend ; and, clasping her hands together with trepidation and anguish, implored her to be as faithful to her secret as she had proved herself to Constantine's : "I would sooner die," added the agitated Mary, "than have him know my rashness, perhaps my indelicacy ! Let me possess his esteem, lady Tinemouth ! Let him suppose that I only *esteem* him ! More, I should shrink from ; I have seen him beset by some of my sex ; and to be classed with *them !* To have him imagine that my affection is like *theirs !* I could not bear it ; I entreat you, let him respect me !"

The impetuosity, and almost despair, with which Miss Beaufort uttered these incoherent sentences, pierced the soul of lady Tinemouth. How different was the spirit of this pure and dignified love, to the wild passion which she had seen shake the frame of lady Sara Roos !

They remained silent for some time.

"May I see your ladyship to-morrow ?" asked Mary, drawing her cloak about her.

"I fear not," replied the countess ; "I leave this house to-morrow."

Miss Beaufort rose ; her lips, hands, and feet trembled so, that she could hardly stand. Lady Tinemouth threw her arm round her waist, and kissing her forehead, said, "Heaven bless you, my sweet friend ! May all the wishes of your innocent heart be gratified !"

The countess supported her to the door. Mary hesitated an instant ; then flinging her snowy arms over her ladyship's neck, in a voice scarcely audible, articulated—"Only tell me !—does he love Euphemia ?"

Lady Tinemouth strained her to her breast—"No, my dearest girl; I am certain, both from what I have heard him say, and observed in his eyes, that had he dared to love any one, *you* would have been the object of his choice."

How Miss Beaufort got into lady Dundas's chair she had no recollection, so completely was she absorbed in the recent scene. Her mind was perplexed, her heart ached; and she arrived in Harley-street so much disordered and unwell, as to oblige her to retire immediately to her room, with the excuse of a violent pain in her head.

This interview induced lady Tinemouth to destroy the note which she had written to Thaddeus; and before night to frame another, better calculated to produce comfort to all parties. What she declared to Mary respecting the state of the count's affections was sincere.

She had early penetrated through the veil of bashfulness, with which Miss Beaufort obscured that countenance, so usually the tablet of her soul. The countess easily translated the quick receding of her eye whenever Thaddeus turned his attention towards her; the confused reply that followed any unexpected question from his lips; and, above all, the unheeded sighs heaved by her, when he left the room, or when his name was mentioned during his absence. These symptoms too truly revealed to lady Tinemouth the state of her young friend's bosom.

But the circumstances being different, her observations on the count were not nearly so conclusive. Mary had absolutely given the empire of her happiness, with her heart, into his hands. Thaddeus wished that his ruined hopes did not prevent him

from laying his at her feet. Therefore, not having surrendered his imagination to a passion, which in his situation, he considered as madness, he was unembarrassed in her presence: and, regarding her as a being beyond his reach, conceived no suspicions, that she entertained one dearer thought of him, than what mere philanthropy could authorise.

He contemplated her unequalled beauty, graces, talents, and virtues, with an admiration bordering on idolatry! yet his heart flew from the confession that he loved her: and it was not until reason demanded of his candour, why he felt a pang on seeing Mary's purse in the hands of Mr. Lascelles, that, with a glowing cheek, he owned to himself, he was jealous: that although he had not presumed to elevate one wish towards the possession of Miss Beaufort; yet, when Lascelles flaunted her name on his tongue, he found how deep would be the wound in his peace, should she ever give her hand to another.

Confounded at this discovery of a passion, the seeds of which he supposed had been crushed by the weight of his misfortunes, he proceeded homewards in a trance of thought, not far differing from that of the dreamer, who sinks into a light but harassing slumber, and, full of terror, doubts whether he be sleeping or awake.

The sudden illness of general Butzou having put these ideas to flight, Thaddeus was sitting on the bed side, with his anxious thoughts fixed on the pale spectacle of mortality before him, when Nancy brought in a letter from the countess. He took it, and going to the window, undrew the curtain, where he read, with mingled pain and pleasure, the following epistle:

" *To Mr. Constantine.*

" I know not, my dear count, when I shall be permitted to see you again ; perhaps never on this side the grave !

" Since Heaven has denied me the tenderness of my own children, it would have been a comfort to me, might I have continued to act a parent's part by you. But my cruel lord, and my more cruel son, jealous of the consolation I meet in the society of my few intimate friends, command me to quit London ; and as I have ever made it a system to obey their injunctions strictly, I shall go.

" It pierces me to the soul, my *dear son !* (allow my maternal heart to call you by that name) it distresses me deeply that I am compelled to leave the place where *you* are : and more, I cannot see you before my departure, for I quit town to-morrow afternoon.

" Write to me often, my loved Sobieski : your letters will be some alleviation to my lot during the fulfilment of my hard duty.

" Wear the enclosed gold chain for my sake ; it is one of two given me a long time ago by Miss Beaufort. If I have not greatly mistaken you, the present will now possess a double value in your estimation : indeed it ought. Sensibility and thankfulness being properties of your nature, they will not deny a lively gratitude to the generous interest with which that amiable young woman regards your fate. It is impossible that the avowed count Sobieski (whom, a year ago, I remember her animated fancy painted in the most romantic colours,) could excite more of her esteem than I know she has bestowed on the untitled Constantine.

"She is all nobleness and affection. Although I am sensible that she will leave much behind her in London to regret, she insists on accompanying me to the Wolds. Averse to transgress so far on her goodness, I firmly refused her offer until this evening, when I received so warm and urging a letter from the kind girl, that I could no longer withhold my consent.

"Indeed, this lovely creature's active friendship proves of high consequence to me now, situated as I am with regard to a new whim of the earl's. Had she not benevolently presented herself, in obedience to my lord's commands, I should have been obliged to go alone; he having taken some wild antipathy to Miss Egerton, whose company he has interdicted. At any rate, her parents would not have allowed me her society much longer, for Mr. Montresor is to return this month.

"I shall not be easy, my dear count, until I hear from you. Pray write soon; and inform me of every particular respecting the poor general: is he likely to recover?

"In all things, my *loved son*, in which I can serve you, remember, that I expect you will call upon me *as a mother*. Your own could hardly have regarded you with deeper tenderness, than does your affectionate and faithful

"ADELIZA TINEMOUTH.

"*Grosvenor Place, Thursday, midnight.*

"Direct to me at Harwold-park, Wolds, Lincolnshire."

Several opposite emotions discomposed the mind of Thaddeus whilst reading this epistle. Increased abhorrence of the man, whom he believed to be incontestably his father, united with regret arising

from the proposed departure of lady Tinemouth, could neither subdue the balmy effect of her maternal affection, nor wholly check that thrill, which the unusual mentioning of Miss Beaufort's name made throb in his heart, and paint his cheeks with crimson. He read the sentence which contained the assurances of her friendship a third time.

"Delicious poison!" cried he, kissing the paper; "if adoring thee, lovely Mary, be added to my other sorrows, I shall be resigned! There is sweetness even in the thought. Could I credit all which my dear lady Tinemouth affirms, the conviction that I possess one kind solicitude in the mind of Miss Beaufort, would be ample compensation for——"

He did not finish the sentence, but sighing profoundly, rose from his chair.

"For any thing, except beholding her the wife of another!" was the sentiment with which his heart panted. Thaddeus had never known a selfish wish in his life; and this first instance of his desiring that good to be unappropriated, which he might not himself enjoy, made him start.

"There is a fault in my heart, a dreadful one!" Dissatisfied with himself, he was preparing to answer her ladyship's letter, when, turning to the date, he discovered that it had been written on Thursday night; and, in consequence of Nancy's neglect in not calling at the coffee-house, had been delayed a day and a half before it reached his hands.

His disappointment at this accident was severe. She was gone, and Miss Beaufort along with her!

"Then, indeed, I am unfortunate!" said he, holding the chain in his hand, and looking on it;

"I am at once deprived of all that rendered my forlorn existence in this town tolerable!"

He put the chain round his neck; and, with a true lover-like feeling, thought that it warmed the heart, which mortification had chilled; but the fancy was evanescent, and he again turned to watch the fading life of his friend.

During the lapse of a few days, in which the general appeared merely to breathe, Thaddeus, instead of his attendance, dispatched regular notes to Harley-street. In answer to these excuses, he commonly received little tender billets from Euphemia; the strain of which he seemed totally to overlook, by the cold respect he evinced in his diurnal apologies for absence.

This young lady was so full of lamentation over the trouble which her elegant tutor must endure in watching his sick friend, that she never thought it worth while to mention any creature in the house, except herself and her commiseration. Thaddeus longed to inquire about Miss Beaufort; but the more he wished it, the greater was his reluctance to write her name.

Things were in this situation, when one evening, as he was reading by the light of a solitary candle in his little sitting-room, the door opened, and Nancy stepped in, followed by a person wrapped in a large black cloak. Thaddeus rose.

"A lady, Sir," said Nancy, courtesying.

The moment the girl withdrew, the visitor cast herself into a chair, and sobbing aloud, seemed in violent agitation. The count, astonished and alarmed, approached her, and though she was unknown, offered her every assistance in his power.

Catching hold of the hand which, with the greatest respect he extended towards her, she instantly

displayed to his dismayed sight the features of lady Sara Roos.

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed he, involuntarily starting back.

"Do not cast me off, Constantine!" cried she, clasping his arm, and looking up to him with a face of anguish bathed in tears, "on you alone I now depend for happiness! for existence!"

A cold damp stood on the forehead of her auditor. A tremour shook him from head to foot.

"Dear lady Sara, what am I to understand by this emotion? Has any thing dreadful happened? Is captain Roos—"

Lady Sara shuddered; and, still grasping his hand, answered in words, every one of which palsied the heart of Thaddeus with horror. "He is coming home. He is now at Portsmouth. Oh, Constantine! I am not yet so debased as to live with him, when my heart is yours."

At this shameful declaration, Thaddeus clenched his teeth in fearful agony; and, striking his hand upon his closed eyes, to shut her from his sight, he turned suddenly round, and walked towards another part of the room.

Lady Sara followed him. Her cloak having fallen off, now displayed her fine form in all the fervour of grief and distraction; she wrung her snowy arms in despair; and, with accents rendered more piercing by the anguish of her mind, exclaimed, "What! You hate me? You throw me from you? Cruel, barbarous Constantine! Can you drive from your feet the woman who adores you? Can you cast her, who is without a home, into the streets?"

Thaddeus felt his hand wet with her tears; he fixed his eyes upon her with almost delirious horror. Her hat being off, gave a loose to her long

black hair, which, falling in masses over her shoulders and eyes, gave such additional wildness to the imploring and frantic expression of those eyes, as distracted his soul.

"Rise, madam! For Heaven's sake, Lady Sara!" and he stooped to support her up.

"Never," cried she, covering her face with her hands, "never! till you promise to protect me. My husband comes home to-night, and I have left his house forever. You, you!" exclaimed she, extending her arms to his averted face; "O Constantine! you have robbed me of my peace! On your account I have flown from my home. For mercy's sake, do not abandon me!"

"Lady Sara," cried he, looking wildly round him, "I cannot speak to you in this position! Rise, I implore you!"

"Only," returned she, "only say that you will protect me! That I shall find shelter here! Say this, and I will rise, and bless you forever."

Thaddeus knew not what to reply. Distressed by her imprudence, terror-struck at the violent lengths to which she seemed determined to carry her unhappy and guilty passion, he in vain sought to evade this direct demand; for lady Sara, perceiving the reluctance and horror of his looks, sprang from her knees, and in a more resolute voice, exclaimed, "Then, Sir, you will not protect me? You scorn and desert a woman, whom you well know has long loved you? Whom, by your artful behaviour, you have reduced to this disgrace!"

The count, surprised and shocked at this accusation, with respectful gentleness, but resolution, denied the charge.

Lady Sara again melted into tears, and supporting her tottering frame against his shoulder, replied, in a stifled voice, "I know it well. I have nothing to blame for my wretched state, but my own weakness. Pardon, dear Constantine, the dictates of my madness! O! I would gladly owe such misery to any other source than myself!"

"Then, dear lady Sara," rejoined Thaddeus, gaining courage from the mildness of her manner, "let me implore you to return to your own house!"

"Don't ask me," cried she, grasping his hand; "O, Constantine! if you knew what it was to receive with smiles of affection, a creature whom you loathe! you would shrink with disgust from what you require. I hate captain Roos. Can I open my arms to meet him, when my heart excludes him forever? Can I welcome him home, when I wish him in his grave?"

The count extricated his hand from her grasp. Her ladyship perceived the repugnance which dictated this action; and clasping her hands together, ejaculated, "Unhappy woman that I am! to hate, where I am loved! to love, where I am hated!—Kill me, Constantine!" cried she, turning suddenly towards him, and sinking down on a chair; "but do not give me such another look as that!"

"Dear lady Sara," replied he, seating himself by her side, "what would you have me do? You see that I have no proper means of protecting you. I have no mother, no sisters, no friends to receive you. You see that I am a *poor* man. Besides, your character——"

"Talk not of my character!" cried she, "I will have none that does not depend on you! Cruel

Constantine ! you will not understand me. I want no riches, no friends, but yourself. Give me *your* home and *your* arms," added she, throwing herself in an agony on his bosom, "and beggary would be paradise !"

Thaddeus felt a dimness spread over his eyes. So much loveliness, such love, such disinterestedness, for a moment obliterated every other impression on his heart ; but, recovering himself in an instant, he tore himself from her clinging arms, and staggering back a few paces, held her off with his hand, and, in a voice of distraction, exclaimed, "Leave me, for pity's sake !"

"No, dearest Constantine !" cried she, aware of her advantage, and again casting herself at his feet, "Never, never, will I leave this spot, till you consent that your home shall be my home ! That I shall serve you forever !"

"All-powerful Heaven !" exclaimed Thaddeus, in an agony.

Lady Sara redoubled her tears and prayers.

"Seducing, dangerous woman !" cried he, looking at her with wild horror, "what is it you demand? Would you tear from me all that renders life bearable ? Would you take from me a blameless conscience, and drive me to end my miserable days by a deed of desperation ?"

Despair was in every feature of his countenance, as he uttered the last words, and flew from her into the apartment where the general lay asleep. Lady Sara, little expecting to see any one but the man she loved, rushed in after him, and was again pressing to throw her imploring arms about her determined victim, when her eyes were suddenly arrested by a livid, and, she thought, dead face of a person lying on the bed. Fixed to the spot, she stood for a

moment ; then, putting her spread hand on her forehead, uttered a faint cry, and full heart-struck and senseless on the floor.

Thaddeus, having instant conviction of her mistake, eagerly seized the moment of her insensibility to convey her home. He hastily went to the top of the stairs, called to Nancy to run for a coach, and then returning to the extended figure of lady Sara, lifted her in his arms, and carried her back to the room they had left.

By the help of hartshorn and water, he restored her to a sense of existence. She slowly opened her eyes ; then raising her head, looked round her with a terrified air, when her eye falling on the still open door of the general's room, she caught Thaddeus by the arm, and said, in a trembling voice, " O, take me hence."

Whilst she yet spoke, a coach stopped at the door. The count rose, and attempted to support her agitated frame against his shoulder ; but she trembled to such a degree, that he was obliged to throw his arm about her waist, and almost carry her down stairs.

When he placed her in the carriage, she said, in a faint tone, " you surely will not leave me."

Thaddeus returned no other answer, than desiring Nancy to sit by the general until she saw him again ; and stepping into the coach, lady Sara snatched his hand, and bathed it with her tears.

" Whither are you going to take me ?"

" You shall again, dear lady Sara," replied he, " return to a guiltless and peaceful home."

" I cannot meet my husband ;" cried she, wringing her hands, " he will see all my premeditated guilt in my countenance. O ! Constantine, have pity on me ! Miserable creature that I am !" added

she, redoubling her grief, "It is *horrible* to live *with you!* It is *dreadful* to live *with him!* Take me not home, I entreat you!"

The count took her clasped hands in his.

"Reflect for a moment, my dear lady Sara. I believe, if you love me, that it was in consequence of virtues which you thought I possessed."

"Indeed you do me justice!" cried she.

He continued.

"Think then, should I yield to the influence of your beauty, and plunge you into a situation like that——" and he pointed to a group of unhappy women assembled at the corner of Pall Mall. Lady Sara drew back with a thrill of horror; "Think, where would be, not only your innocence, but its price? I being no longer worthy of your esteem, you would hate me; you would hate yourself; and we should continue together, two guilty creatures abhorring each other."

Lady Sara, drowned in tears, did not articulate any sounds but deep sighs, until the coach stopped in St. James's Place.

"Go in with me," were all the words she could utter, as pulling her veil over her face, she gave him her hand to assist her down the step.

"Is captain Roos arrived?" asked Thaddeus of a servant, who, to his great joy, replied in the negative. During his ride, he had alarmed himself, by anticipating the disagreeable suspicions which might arise in the mind of the husband, should he see his wife in her present strange and distracted state.

When Thaddeus seated lady Sara in her drawing-room, he offered to take a respectful leave; but her ladyship getting up, laid one hand on his arm, whilst, with the other, she covered her con-

vulsed features, and said, " Constantine, before you go ; before we part, perhaps eternally ; O ! tell me that you do not hate me ! That you do not *hate* me !" repeated she, in a firmer tone ; " I know too well, how deeply I am despised."

" Cease, my dearest madam," returned he, tenderly replacing her on the sofa, " cease these vehement expressions. Shame does not depend on possessing passions, but on yielding to them. You have conquered, lady Sara ; and, in future, I shall respect and love you as a dear friend. Whoever holds the first place in my heart, you shall always retain the second."

" Noble ! generous Constantine !" cried she, straining his hand to her lips, and bathing it with her tears ; " I can require no more. May Heaven bless you wherever you go !"

Thaddeus dropt upon his knee, imprinted on both her hands a compassionate and fervent kiss, and, rising hastily, quitted the room without a word.

CHAP. VII.

The dream-like consternation which enveloped the count's faculties since the preceding scene, was dissipated next morning by the appearance of Dr. Cavendish. When he saw the general, he declared it to be his opinion, that in consequence of his long and tranquil slumbers, some favourable crisis was near: "Probably," added he, "the recovery of his intellects. Such *phenomena*, in these cases, often happen immediately before death."

"Heaven grant it may in this!" ejaculated the count; "to hear his venerable voice again acknowledge, that I have acted by him as became the grandson of his friend would be a comfort to me."

"But, Sir," said the kind physician, touching his burning hand, "you must not forget the cares which are due to your own life. If you wish well to the general during the few days he may have to live, you are indispensably obliged to preserve your own strength. You are already ill, and require air. I have an hour of leisure," continued he, pulling out his watch; "I will remain here, till you have taken two or three walks round the park. It is absolutely necessary: In this instant, I must take the privilege of friendship, and insist on obedience."

Thaddeus, seeing that the benevolence of the excellent Cavendish was resolute, took his hat, and, with harassed spirits, walked down the lane towards Charing-cross.

On entering Spring-garden gate, to his extreme surprise, the first objects which met his sight were Miss Euphemia Dundas, and Miss Beaufort.

Euphemia accosted him with ten thousand inquiries respecting his friend, besides congratulations on his own good looks.

Thaddeus bowed; then, smiling faintly, turned to the blushing Mary; who, conscious of what passed in the late conversation between herself and lady Tinemouth, trembled so much, that fearing to excite the suspicion of Miss E. Dundas by such tremour, she withdrew her arm, and walked forward alone, tottering at every step.

"I thought, Miss Beaufort," said he, addressing himself to her, "that lady Tinemouth was to have had the happiness of your company to Harwold-park?"

"Yes," returned she, fearfully raising her eyes to his face; the hectic glow of which conveyed impressions to her, different from those which Euphemia expressed; "but, to my indescribable alarm and disappointment, the morning after I had written to fix my departure with her ladyship, my aunt's foot caught in the iron of the stair-carpet as she was coming down stairs, and throwing her from the top to the bottom, broke her leg. I could not quit her a moment during her agonies; and the surgeons having expressed their fears that a fever might ensue, I was obliged altogether to decline my attendance on the countess."

"And how is Mrs. Dorothy?" inquired Thaddeus, truly concerned at the accident.

"She is better, though confined to her bed," replied Euphemia, speaking before her companion could open her lips; "and, indeed, poor Mary and

myself, having been such close nurses, that my mother insisted on our walking out to-day."

"And lady Tinemouth," returned Thaddeus, again addressing Miss Beaufort, "of course, she went alone?"

"Alas, yes!" replied she; "Miss Egerton was forced to join her family in Leicestershire."

"I believe," cried Euphemia, sighing, "that Miss Egerton is going to be married. Hers has been a long attachment. Happy girl! I have heard Captain Roos, whose lieutenant her intended husband was, declare that he is the finest young man in the navy. Did you ever see Mr. Montresor?" added she, turning her pretty eyes on the count.

"I never had that honour."

"Bless me! that is odd, considering your intimacy with Miss Egerton. I assure you he is very charming."

Thaddeus neither heard this, nor a great deal more of the same trifling chitchat, which was slipping from the tongue of Miss Euphemia; so intently were his eyes (sent by his heart,) searching the downcast, but expressive countenance of Miss Beaufort. His soul was full, and the fluctuations of her colour, with the embarrassment of her step, interested and affected him.

"Then you do not leave town for some time, Miss Beaufort;" inquired he, "I may yet anticipate the honour of seeing——" he hesitated a moment, then added, in a depressed tone—"your aunt, when I next wait on the Miss Dundases."

"Our stay depends entirely on her health," returned she, striving to rally herself; "and I am sure she will be happy to see you better; for, I am

sorry to say, that I cannot agree with Euphemia in thinking you look well."

"Merely a slight fever," replied he; "the effect of an anxiety, which I fear will too soon cease in the death of its cause. I came out now, for a little air only, whilst the physician remains with my friend."

"Poor old gentleman!" sighed Mary, "how venerable was his appearance the morning in which we saw him in the Park! What a benign countenance!"

"His countenance!" replied Thaddeus, his eyes turning mournfully towards the lovely speaker, "is the emblem of his character. He was the most amiable of men."

"And you are likely to lose so interesting a friend, dear Mr. Constantine; how I pity you!" As Euphemia uttered these words, she put the corner of her glove to her eye.

The count looked at her, and, perceiving that her commiseration was affectation, he turned to Miss Beaufort, who was walking pensively by his side, and made further inquiries respecting Mrs. Dorothy. Solicitous to be at St. Martin's Lane, he was preparing to quit them, when Mary, as with a full heart she courtesied her adieu, at last, in a hurried and confused manner, said, "Pray, Mr. Constantine, take care of yourself. You have other friends besides the one you are going to lose. I know lady Tinemouth, I know my aunt——" she stopped short, and, covered with blushes, stood panting for another word to close the sentence; when Thaddeus, forgetting the presence of Euphemia, with delighted precipitancy, caught hold of the hand, which, in the energy of speaking, was a little extended towards him, and pressing it with fervour,

relinquished it immediately: overcome by confusion at the presumption of the action, he bowed, with agitation, to both ladies, and hastened through the Friary passage into St. James's Street.

"Miss Beaufort!" cried Euphemia, reddening with vexation, and returning a perfumed handkerchief to her pocket; "I did not understand that you and Mr. Constantine were on such intimate terms!"

"What do you mean, Euphemia?"

"That you have betrayed the confidence which I reposed in you," cried the angry beauty, wiping away the really starting tears with her white lace cloak; "I told you that the elegant Constantine was the lord of my heart; and you have seduced him from me! Till you came, he was so respectful, so tender, so devoted! But I am rightly used! I ought to have carried my secret to the grave."

In vain Miss Beaufort protested; in vain she declared herself ignorant of possessing any power over even one wish of Constantine. Euphemia thought it monstrous pretty to be the injured friend and forsaken mistress; and all along the Park, and up Constitution-Hill, until they arrived at lady Dundas's carriage, which was waiting opposite Devonshire Wall, she affected to weep. When seated, she continued her invectives: she called Miss Beaufort ungenerous, perfidious, traitor to friendship: and every romantic and disloyal name, which her inflamed fancy could devise; but the sight of Harley-street checked her transports, and relieved Miss Beaufort from a load of impertinence and abuse.

During this short interview, Thaddeus received an impulse to his affections, which hurried them

forward with an impetuous rapidity, that neither time nor succeeding sorrows could stop or stem.

Mary's heavenly beaming eyes seemed to have encircled his head with love's brightest halo. The command, "Preserve yourself for others besides your dying friend," yet throbbed at his heart, with ten thousand rapturous visions dancing before his sight, he trod in air, until the humble door of his melancholy home, presenting itself, at once wrecked the illusion, and offered sad reality, in the person of his emaciated friend.

On the count's entrance into the sick chamber, doctor Cavendish gave him a few directions to pursue when the general should awake from a sleep, in which he had been sunk, since the preceding night; and Thaddeus, with a heart still more depressed, from its late unusual exaltation, sat down on the bed for the remainder of the day.

At five in the afternoon, general Butzou awoke; seeing the count, he stretched out his withered hand, and, as the doctor predicted, accosted him rationally.

"Come, dear Sobieski! Come nearer, my dear master!"

Thaddeus rose, and throwing himself on his knees, took the offered hand with apparent composure: It was a hard struggle, to restrain the emotions, which were roused by this awful contemplation; the return of reason to the soul on the instant she was summoned into the presence of her Maker!

"My kind, my beloved lord!" added Butzou, "to me you have indeed performed a christian's part; you have clothed, sheltered, and preserved me in your bosom. Blessed son of my most honoured master!"

The good old man put the hand of Thaddeus to his lips. Thaddeus could not speak.

"I am going, dear Sobieski," continued the general, in a lower voice, "where I shall meet your noble grandfather, your mother, and my brave countrymen: and if Heaven grants me power, I will tell them by whose labour I have lived, on whose breast I have expired."

Thaddeus could no longer restrain his tears.

"Dear, dear general!" exclaimed he, grasping his hand; "my grandfather, my mother, my country! I lose them again in thee!—O! would the same summons take *me* hence!"

"Hush!" returned the dying man, "Heaven reserves you, my honoured lord, for wise purposes. Youth and health are the marks of commission: *You* possess them, with virtues, which will bear you through the contest. *I* have done; and my merciful Judge has evinced his pardon of my errors, by sparing me in my old age, and leading me to die with you."

Thaddeus pressed his friend's hand to his streaming eyes, and promised to be resigned. Butzou smiled his satisfaction; then, closing his eye-lids, he composed himself to a rest, that was neither sleep nor stupor, but a balmy serenity, which seemed to be tempering his late recovered soul, for its immediate entrance on a world of eternal peace.

At nine o'clock, his breath became broken, with quick sighs. The count's heart trembled, and he drew closer to the pillow. Butzou felt him; and opening his eyes languidly, hardly articulated, (though not a sound escaped the ear of his friend) "Raise my head."

Thaddeus put his arm under his neck, and lifting him up, reclined him against his bosom. But-

zou grasped his hands, and looking gratefully in his face, said, "The arms of a soldier should be a soldier's bed. I am content."

He lay for a moment on the breast of the almost fainting Thaddeus; then suddenly quitting his hold, he cried, "I lose you, Sobieski!"

"I am here," exclaimed the count, catching his motionless hand. The dying general murmured a few words of blessing; and, turning his face inwards, breathed his last sigh on the heart of his last friend.

For a minute, Sobieski remained incapable of thought or action. When he recovered recollection, he withdrew from his melancholy station; and laying the venerable remains of the general on the bed, did not trust his rallied faculties with a second trial; but hastening down stairs, was met by Mrs. Robson.

"My dear Madam," said he, "all is over with my poor friend. Will you do me the kindness to perform those duties to his sacred relics, which I cannot?"

Thaddeus would not allow any person to watch by his friend's coffin, besides himself. The meditations of this solitary night presented to his sound and sensible mind, every argument, rather to induce rejoicing than regret, that the eventful life of the brave Butzou was terminated.

"Yes, illustrious old man!" cried he, gazing on his marbled features, "If valour and virtue be the true sources of nobility, thou surely wast noble! Inestimable defender of Stanislaus and thy country! thou has run a long and bright career; and though thou art fated to rest in the humble

grave of poverty, it will be embalmed by the tears of heaven; it will be engraven on my heart."

Thaddeus did not weep whilst he spoke. Nor did he weep, when he beheld the mould of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, close from his view, the last dwelling of his friend. It began to rain. Doctor Cavendish, putting his arm through the count's, tried to pull him away; but he lingered a moment, and, looking on the dust, as the sexton piled it up, "Wretched Poland!" sighed he, "how far from thee lies one of thy bravest sons!"

Doctor Cavendish regarded him with pity and admiration; but he vainly attempted to persuade him to return with him to dinner: Thaddeus refused the kind invitation; alleging with a faint smile, that, under every misfortune, he found his best comforter to be solitude.

Doctor Cavendish, respecting the resignation and manliness of this answer, urged him no further; but expressing his regret, that they could not meet again until the end of the week, as he was obliged to go to Stamford next day, on a medical consultation; and, shaking hands with him, at the door of Mrs. Robson, they parted.

CHAP. VIII.

NEXT morning, when the count Sobieski unfolded the several packets of papers, which were put into his hands by little Nancy, who brought his breakfast, he laid them, one after the other, on the table, and, sighing heavily, said to himself, "Now comes the bitterness of poverty! Heaven only knows by what means I shall defray these terrific charges!"

The mere personal privations, induced by his fallen fortunes, excited little uneasiness in the mind of Thaddeus. As he never had derived peculiar gratification from the enjoyment of a magnificent house, splendid table, and numerous attendants, he was contented in the field, where he slept on the bare ground, and snatched his hasty meal at uncertain intervals. Watching, rough fare, and other hardships, were dust in the path of honour; he had dashed through them with light and buoyant spirits: And he repined as little at the actual wants of his forlorn state in exile, until, compelled by friendship to contract demands which he could not defray, he was plunged at once into the full horrors of poverty and debt.

He looked at the amount of the bills. The apothecary's was fifteen pounds; the funeral twenty. Thaddeus turned pale. The value of all that he possessed would not produce one half of the sum; besides, he owed five guineas to his good landlady, for numerous little comforts, which she procured for his deceased friend.

"Whatever be the consequence," cried he, "that excellent woman shall not suffer by her humanity! If I have to part with the last memorial of them who were so dear, she shall be repaid."

He scarcely had ceased speaking, when Nancy re-entered the room, and told him, that the apothecary's young man, and the undertaker, were both below, waiting for answers to their letters. The count, reddening with disgust at the unfeeling avidity of these men, desired Nancy to say, that he could not see either of them to-day, but would send to their houses to-morrow.

In consequence of this promise, the men made their bows to Mrs. Robson, (who too well guessed the reason of this message,) and took their leave.

When Thaddeus put the pictures of his mother and the palatine, with other trinkets, into his pocket, he could not forbear an internal invective against the thoughtless meanness of the Miss Dundases; who, since his entrance into their house, had never offered any farther liquidation of the large sum, which they now stood indebted to him, than the trifling note, which had been transmitted to him, prior to his attendance, through the hands of lady Tinemouth.

Whilst his necessities reproached them for this illiberal conduct, his proud heart recoiled at making a request to their charity; for he gathered, from the haughty demeanour of Miss Diana, that what he was entitled to demand would be given, not as a just remuneration for labour received, but as alms of humanity to an indigent emigrant.

"I would rather perish," cried he, putting on his hat, "than ask that woman for a shilling."

When the count laid his treasure on the table of the worthy pawnbroker, he desired to have the value

of the settings, and the pictures put into leather cases. Mr. Burnet, having examined the gold of the miniatures, with the other trinkets, declared, on the word of an honest man, that he could not give more than fifteen pounds.

With difficulty, Thaddeus stifled as torturing a sigh as ever distended his breast, whilst he said—

"I will take it. I only implore you to be careful of the things; trifling as they are, circumstances with which they were connected, render them valuable to me."

"You may depend on me, Sir," replied the pawnbroker, presenting him with the notes and acknowledgment.

When Thaddeus took them, Mr. Burnet's eye was caught by the ring which he wore on his finger.

"That ring seems curious! If you won't think me impertinent, may I ask to look at it?"

The count pulled it off, and forcing a smile, replied, "I suppose it is of little intrinsic value. The setting is antique, but the painting is fine."

Burnet breathed on the diamonds. "If you were to sell it," returned he, "I don't think it would fetch more than three guineas. The diamonds are damaged, and the emeralds would be of little use, being out of fashion here; as for the miniature, it goes for nothing."

"Of course," said Thaddeus, putting it on again; "but I shall never part with it." While he drew on his glove, Mr. Burnet asked him, whether the head was not intended for the king of Poland?

The count, surprised, answered in the affirmative.

"I thought so," answered the man; "it is very like two or three prints which I had in my shop of that king. Indeed I believe I have them some

where now: these matters are but a nine days wonder, and the sale is over."

His auditor did not clearly comprehend him, and he told him so.

"I meant nothing," continued he, "to the disparagement of the king of Poland, or of any other great personage, who is much the subject of conversation. I only intended to say, that every thing has its fashion. The ruin of Poland was the fashionable topic for a month after it happened; and now nobody minds it; it is extinct; it is forgotten."

Thaddeus, in whose bosom all its miseries were written, with a clouded brow, bowed to the remarks of Mr. Burnet, and in silence quitted the shop.

Having arrived at home, he discharged his debt to the worthy Mrs. Robson; then entering his room, he laid the remainder of his money on the bills of the two claimants. It was unequal to the demands of either; yet, in some measure to be just to both, he determined on dividing it between them; and to promise the liquidation of the rest by degrees.

Surely he might hope, that, even should the Miss Dundases entirely forget his claims on them, his labour could, in the course of time, make drawings sufficient to cover the residue of the debt! But he was not permitted to put this calculation to the trial.

When he called on the apothecary, and offered him five guineas, the man refused it with insolence, insisting upon having the whole. Unused to the language of compulsion and vulgarity, the count quitted the shop, telling the man that he was at liberty to act as he thought fit; and, with no very serene countenance, he entered the undertaker's.

warehouse. This man was civil: to him Thaddeus gave the sum, half of which the apothecary had rejected with so much derision. The undertaker's politeness a little calmed the irritated temper of the count, who returned home, musing on the vile nature of that part of mankind, which can with indifference heap insult upon distress.

Judging men by his own disposition, he seldom gave credence to the possibility of such conduct. He had been told of dastardly spirits; but never having seen them, and possessing no prototype within his own breast of what he heard, the repeated relation passed over his mind without leaving an impression. He sprung into the world, filled with animating hopes of virtue and renown. He was virtuous; he became powerful, great, and renowned. Creation seemed paradise to his eyes: It was the task of adversity to teach him a different lesson of mankind. Not less virtuous, not less great, his fortunes fell, he became poor; the perfidy, the hardheartedness of man, made, and kept him friendless. When he wanted succour and consolation, he found the world peopled by a race too mean, even to bear the stamp of the devil.

Whilst Sobieski was employed next morning at his drawing, Mrs. Robson sent Nancy to say, that there were two strange looking men below, who wanted to speak with him. Not doubting that they were messengers from the apothecary, he desired the girl to shew them up stairs. When they entered his room, the count, with the politeness spontaneous to his ever wakeful benevolence, rose. One of the men stepped forward, and laying a slip of paper on the table, said, "I arrest you, Sir, at the suit of Mr. Jackson, the apothecary."

Thaddeus coloured; but, suppressing every indignant emotion, he calmly asked the men, whither they were going to take him?

"If you like," replied one of them, "you may be well enough lodged. I never heard a word against Clements in Wych-street."

"Is that a prison?" inquired Thaddeus.

"No, not exactly that, Sir;" answered the other man, laughing. You seem to know little of the matter, which, for a Frenchman, is odd enough! But mayhap you have never a *lock-up-house* in France? *Howsomever*, if you pay well, Mr. Clements will give you lodgings as long as you like. It is only *poor* rogues who are *obligated* to go to Newgate; such *gemmen* as you can live as *ginteelly* in Wych-street, as at their own houses."

There was such an air of derision about this fellow, as he spoke and glanced round the room, that Thaddeus, sternly contracting his brows, deigned to take no further notice of him; but, turning towards his more civil companion, said,

"Has this person informed me rightly? Am I going to a prison, or am I not? If I do not possess money to pay Mr. Jackson, I can have none to spend elsewhere."

"Then you must go to Newgate," answered the man, in as surly a tone as his comrade's had been insolent.

"I'll run for a coach, Wilson," cried the other, opening the room door.

"I will not pay for one," said Thaddeus, at once comprehending the sort of wretches into whose custody he had fallen; "follow me down stairs. I shall walk."

Mrs. Robson was in her shop as he passed to the street. She called out, "You will come home to dinner, Sir?"

"No," replied he; "but you shall hear from me before night."

The men, winking at each other, sullenly pursued his steps down the Lane. In the Strand, Thaddeus asked them which way he was to proceed.

"Straight on," cried one of them; "most folks find the road to a gaol easy enough."

Involved in thought, the count walked forward, unmindful of the stare which the well known occupation of his attendants attracted towards him. When he arrived at Somerset-house, one of the men stepped up to him, and said, "We are now nearly opposite Wych-street. You had better take your mind again, and go there instead of Newgate. I don't much think you will like the debtor's hole."

Thaddeus, coldly thanking him, repeated his determination to be led to Newgate. But when he beheld the immense walls, within which he believed he should be immured for life, his feet seemed rooted to the ground: and when the massy gates were opened, and closed upon him, he felt as if suddenly deprived of the vital spring of existence. A mist spread over his eyes, his soul shuddered, and with difficulty he followed the men into the place where his commitment was to be ratified. Here, all the proud energies of his nature again rallied round his heart.

The brutal questions of the people in office, re-echoed by taunts from the wretches who had brought him to the prison, were of a strain so

much beneath his answering, that he stood perfectly silent during the business; and when dismissed, without evincing any signs of discomposure, followed the turnkey to his cell.

One deal chair, a table, and a miserable bed, were all the furniture it contained. The floor was paved with flags; and the sides of the apartment daubed with discoloured plaster, part of which having been peeled off by the damp, exposed to view large spaces of the naked stones.

Before the turnkey withdrew, he asked Thaddeus whether he wanted any thing?

"Only a pen, ink, and paper."

The man held out his hand.

"I have no money," replied Sobieski.

"Then you get nothing here," answered the fellow, pulling the door after him.

Thaddeus threw himself on the chair, and, in the bitterness of the moment, exclaimed, "Can these scoundrels be christians? Can they be men?" He cast his eyes round him with the wildness of despair: "All powerful Heaven! Can it be possible, that, for a few guineas, I am to be confined in this place during life? In these narrow bounds, am I to waste my youth, my existence? Even so; I cannot, I will not degrade the spirit of Poland, by imploring assistance from any native of a land, in which avarice has extinguished the feelings of humanity."

By the next morning, the first paroxysm of indignation having subsided, Thaddeus entertained a cooler and more reasonable opinion of his situation. He considered, that though he was a prisoner, it was in consequence of debts incurred in behalf of a friend, whose latter hours were rendered less

wretched by such means. Knowing that, notwithstanding '*all that man could do unto him*,' he had brought an approving conscience, to lighten the glooms of his dungeon, he resumed his wonted serenity; and continued to distance the impertinent freedom of his gaolers by a stern dignity, which extorted civility, and commanded respect.

CHAP. X.

Several days elapsed, without the inhabitants of Harley-street hearing any tidings of Thaddeus.

Miss Dundas never bestowed a thought on his absence, except when descanting on her favourite subject, "the insolence of dependant people," she alleged his daring to withdraw himself, as an instance. Miss Euphemia uttered all her complaints to Miss Beaufort, whom she accused of not being satisfied with seducing the affections of Mr. Constantine, but she must also spirit him away, lest by remorse he should be induced to renew his former devotion at the shrine of her tried constancy.

Mary found these secret conferences very frequent and very teizing. She believed neither the count's past devoirs to Euphemia, nor his present allegiance to herself. With anxiety, she watched the slow decline of every succeeding day, hoping, that each knock at the door would present either himself, or an apology for his absence.

In vain her reason urged the weakness and folly of giving way to the influence of a passion, as violent as it was unforeseen. "It is not his personal graces;" murmured she, whilst her dewy eyes remained rivetted on the floor; "it is not they; they have not accomplished this effect on me! No! matchless as he is; though his countenance, when illumined by the rare splendours of genius, expresses godlike beauty; yet, my heart tells me,

I would rather see all that perfection demolished, than lose one beam of those bright charities, which first attracted my esteem. Yes, Constantine!" cried she, rising in agitation; "I could adore thy virtues were they even in the bosom of deformity. It is these that I love; it is these that are thyself! It is thy noble, god-like soul, that so entirely fills my heart; and will forever!"

She recalled the hours, which in his society glided so swiftly by, to pass in review before her. They came, and her tears redoubled. Neither his words, nor his looks, had been kinder to her, than to Miss Egerton, or lady Sara Roos. She remembered his wild action in the Park: it had transported her at the moment; it even now made her heart throb; but she ceased to believe it intended more, than an animated expression of gratitude.

An adverse apprehension seemed to have taken possession of her breast. In proportion to the vehemence of Miss Euphemia's reproaches, (who insisted on the passion of Thaddeus,) she the more doubted the evidence of those delightful emotions, which had rushed over her soul, when she found her hand so fervently pressed in his.

Euphemia never made a secret of the *tendresse* she professed: and Miss Beaufort, having been taught by her own heart, to read distinctly the eyes of lady Sara, the result of her observations had long acted as a caustic on her peace: it robbed her cheeks of their bloom, and compelled her to number the lingering minutes of the night with sighs. But her deep and modest flame assumed no violence; retreated far from sight, it burnt the more intensely.

Instead of overvaluing the fine person of Thaddeus, the encomiums which it exacted even from the lips of prejudice, occasioned one source of her pain. She could not bear to think it probable, that the man, whom she believed, and knew to be gifted with every attribute of goodness and of heroism, might one day be induced to sacrifice the rich treasure of his mind to a creature, who would select him from the rest, merely on account of his exterior superiority.

Such was the train of Mary's meditations, when covering her face with her handkerchief, she exclaimed in a tender and interrupted voice, "Ah! why did I leave my quiet home, to expose myself to the vicissitudes of society? sequestered from the world, neither its pageants nor its mortifications could have reached me there. I have seen thee, matchless Constantine! Like a bright star, thou hast passed before my eyes! Like a being of a superior order! And I never, never can debase my nature, to love another. Thy image shall follow me into solitude; shall consecrate my soul to the practice of every virtue! I will emulate thy excellence, when, perhaps, thou hast forgotten that I exist."

The fit of despondence, which threatened to succeed this last melancholy reflection, was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Euphemia. Miss Beaufort hastily rose, and drew her ringlets over her eyes.

"O, Mary!" cried the little beauty, holding up her pretty hands, "What do you think has happened!"

"What?" demanded she in alarm, and hastening towards the door, "any thing to my aunt?"

"No, no:" answered Euphemia, catching her by the arm; "but could my injured heart derive satisfaction from revenge, I should now be happy. Punishment has overtaken the faithless Constantine."

Miss Beaufort looked aghast; and grasping the back of a chair, to prevent herself from falling, breathlessly inquired what she meant.

"Oh! he is sent to prison!" cried Euphemia, not regarding the real agitation of her auditor, (so entirely was she occupied in appearing overwhelmed with distress herself,) and wringing her hands, she continued, in a whimpering voice, "that frightful wretch, Mr. Lascelles, is just come in to dinner. You cannot think with what devilish glee he told me, that, about a week ago, as he was driving out of town, he saw Mr. Constantine, with two bailiffs behind him, walking down Fleet-street! And, besides, I verily believe, he said he had irons on."

"Father of heaven!" ejaculated Mary, with a cry of terror at this *ad libitum* addition of Euphemia's, "What can he have done?"

"Bless my soul, child," returned Euphemia, staring at her, as she sat pale and trembling in a chair; "Why, what frightens you so? Does not every body run in debt without minding it?"

Miss Beaufort shook her head; and, looking distractedly about her, put her hand to her forehead. Euphemia, now quite alarmed, forced her to drink some water; and, whilst the horror-struck Mary, with ten thousand vague and hideous fancies racking her heart, leaned against the wall, the little beauty, unconscious what part of her narrative occasioned these emotions, thought to obliterate what she had said, by saying more; and

determining not to be outdone in '*tender wo*' drew forth her handkerchief, and putting it to her eyes, resumed in a piteous tone :—

"I am sure I shall hate Lascelles all my life, because he did not stop the men, and inquire what jail they were taking him to! You know, my dear, you and I might have visited him. It would have been delightful to have consoled his sad hours! We might have planned his escape."

"In irons!" ejaculated Mary, raising her tearless eye to heaven.

Euphemia coloured at the agonized manner in which these words were reiterated, and rather confusedly replied, "not absolutely in irons. You know that is a metaphorical term for captivity."

"Then he was not in irons?" cried Miss Beaufort, seizing her hand eagerly, "Tell me, for Heaven's sake, tell me, he was not in irons."

"Why then," returned Euphemia, half angry at being obliged to contradict herself; "if you are such a fool, that you cannot understand poetical language, I must tell you he was not."

Mary heard no further; but even at the moment when a bright glow overspread her countenance, fell back senseless into the chair.

Euphemia flew to the top of the stairs, and shrieking violently, stood wringing her hands, until Diana and lady Dundas, followed by several gentlemen, hastened out of the saloon, and demanded what was the matter? as Euphemia pointed to Miss Beaufort's dressing-room door, she staggered, and sinking into the arms of lord Elesmere, fell into the most outrageous hysterics. The marquis, who had just dropt in on his return from St. James's, was so afraid of the agitated lady's tearing his point-lace ruffles, that, in almost as

trembling a state as herself, he gladly shuffled her into the hands of her maid, and scampering down stairs, as if all bedlam were at his heels, sprung into his *vis-a-vis*, and drove off like lightning.

When Miss Beaufort opened her eyes, at the sight of such a crowd she almost relapsed ; but, trying to dispel her confusion, she arose, and supporting herself on the arm of Mrs. Dorothy's maid, thanked the company for their attention, and desired to be assisted to her chamber.

Meanwhile, Euphemia, who had been carried down into the saloon, thought it time to raise her lily head, and utter a few incoherent words : the instant they were breathed, Miss Dundas and Mr. Lascelles, in one voice, demanded what was the matter.

" Has not Mary told you ?" returned her sister, languidly opening her eyes.

" No ;" answered Lascelles, rubbing his hands with delighted curiosity ; " Come, let us have it ?" Euphemia pleased at this, and loving mystery with all her heart waved her hand solemnly, and, in an awful tone, replied ; " Then it passes not *my* lips."

" What, Phemy ?" cried he, " you want us to believe that you have seen a ghost ? But you forget, they don't walk at mid-day."

" Believe what you like," returned she, with an air of consequential contempt ; " I am satisfied to keep the secret."

Miss Dundas burst into a provoking laugh ; and calling her the most incorrigible little idiot in the world encouraged Lascelles to join in the ridicule. Determining to gratify his spleen, if he could not satisfy his curiosity, this witless coxcomb continued the whole day in Harley-street, for the mere

pleasure of tormenting Euphemia. From the dinner hour, until 12 at night, neither his drowsy fancy, nor wakeful malice, could find one other weapon of assault, than the stale jokes of *mysterious chambers*, *lovers incognito*; or the silly addition of two Cupid-struck sweeps popping down the chimney, to pay their addresses to the fair friends. Diana talked of Jupiter with his thunder; and, patting her sister under the chin, added, "I cannot doubt that Miss Beaufort is the favoured Semelé: But, my dear, you over-acted your character! As confidant, a few tears were enough when your lady fainted." During these attacks, Euphemia reclined pompously on a sofa, and not deigning a reply, repelled them with much conceit and haughtiness.

Miss Beaufort remained above an hour alone in her chamber, before she ventured to go near her aunt. Hurt to the soul, that the idle folly of Euphemia should have aroused a terror, which had completely unveiled to the eyes of that inconsiderate girl, the empire which Thaddeus held over her fate, Mary overwhelmed with shame, and arraigning her easy credulity, threw herself on the bed.

Horror-struck at hearing he was led along the streets in chains, she could have no other idea, but that, hurried into the commission of some dreadful deed, he was become amenable to the laws, and might suffer an ignominious death. These thoughts, having rushed at once on her heart, deprived her of all self-command. In the conviction that he was a murderer, she felt as if her life, her honour, her soul were annihilated. And when, in consequence of her agonies, Euphemia confessed that she had, in this last matter, told a falsehood, the tumult of her joy took refuge in insensibility.

Before Miss Beaufort quitted her room, various plans suggested themselves to relieve the unfortunate Thaddeus. She found no hesitation in believing him poor; and perhaps rendered wretchedly so, by the burthen of that sick friend, who, she suspected, might be some near relation. At any rate, she resolved that another sun should not pass over her head, and shine on him in a prison. Having determined to pay all his debts herself, she next thought of how she might manage the affair, without betraying the hand whence the assistance came. Had her aunt been well enough to leave the house, she could not have scrupled at unfolding to her the recent calamity of Mr. Constantine. But well aware that Mrs. Dorothy's maidenly nicety would be outraged at a young woman appearing the sole mover in such a business, she conceived herself obliged, at present, entirely to withhold her confidence, and decide on prosecuting the whole transaction alone.

In consequence of these meditations, her spirits became less discomposed; and, turning towards Mrs. Dorothy Somerset's apartments, she found the good old lady sipping her chocolate.

"What is this I have just heard, my dear Mary? Williams tells me you have been ill!"

Miss Beaufort returned her aunt's gracious inquiry with an affectionate kiss; and, proceeding to inform her, that she had only been alarmed by an invention of Miss Euphemia's, she begged that the subject might drop, it being merely one out of the many schemes, which she believed that young lady had devised to give her torment.

"Ah!" replied Mrs. Dorothy, "I hope I shall be well enough to travel in the course of a few days! I can now walk with a stick; and, upon my word,

I am heartily tired, both of lady Dundas and her daughters."

Mary expressed similar sentiments with these; but, as the declaration passed her lips, a sigh almost buried the last word. Go when she would, she must leave Constantine behind; leave him, without an expectation of beholding him more; without a hope of penetrating the thick cloud, which involved him; and, with which, he had ever baffled any attempt to discover his birth or misfortunes. She wept over this refinement on delicacy, and '*loved him dearer for his mystery.*'

When the dawn broke next morning, it shone on Miss Beaufort's yet unclosed eyes. Sleep could find no languid faculty in her head, whilst her heart was agitated with plans for the relief of Thaddeus. The idea of visiting the coffee house to which she knew the Miss Dundases directed their letters, and of asking questions about a young and handsome man, made her timidity shrink.

"But," exclaimed she, "I am not going on an errand which could spread a blush on the cheek of prudery itself. I am going to impart alleviation to the sufferings of the noblest creature that ever walked the earth."

Perhaps there are few persons, who, being auditors of this speech, would have decided quite so candidly on the superlative by which it was concluded. Mary herself was not wholly divested of doubt about the issue of her conduct; but, conscious that her motive was pure, she descended to the breakfast-room with quieter mind than countenance.

Never before, having had occasion to throw a false gloss on her actions, she scarcely looked up during breakfast. When the cloth was removed,

she rose suddenly from her chair, and turning to Mrs. Dorothy, who sat at the other end of the parlour, with her foot on a stool, she said, "Good bye, aunt. I am going to make some particular calls; but I shall be back in a few hours." Luckily, no one observed her blushing face whilst she spoke, nor the manner in which she shook hands with the old lady, and hurried out of the room.

Breathless with confusion, she could scarcely stand when she arrived in her own chamber; but aware that no time ought to be lost, she tied on a muslin cloak, covered her head with a large summer bonnet, and put a long shawl, with a veil, into her pocket. She hesitated a moment at her chamber door; her eyes filled with tears, drawn from her heart by that keen spirit of truth, which had ever been the guardian of her conduct. Looking up to heaven, she sunk down on her knees, and exclaimed with impetuosity, "Father of mercy! thou only knowest my heart! Direct me, I beseech thee! Let me not commit any thing unworthy of myself, or of the unhappy Constantine—for whom I would sacrifice my life; but not my duty to thee!"

Re-assured by the confidence which this simple act of devotion inspired, she took her parasol, and descended the stairs. The porter was alone in the hall. She inquired for her servant.

"He is not returned, madam."

Miss Beaufort, having foreseen the necessity of getting rid of all attendants, had sent her footman on an errand as far as Cheapside.

"It is of no consequence," returned she to the porter, who was just going to propose one of lady Dundas's men; "I cannot meet with any thing

disagreeable at this time of day, so I shall walk alone."

The man opened the door: and Mary, with a bounding heart, hastened down the street, across the square, and at the bottom of Orchard-street, stepped into a hackney-coach, which she ordered to drive to Slaughter's coffee-house, St. Martin's-lane.

She drew up the glasses; then taking the shawl and veil, with trembling hands covered her graceful figure. Various thoughts agitated her anxious mind whilst the carriage rolled along: and when it drew up at the coffee-house, she involuntarily retreated into the corner. The coach door was opened.

"Will you alight, ma'am?"

"No; call the waiter."

A waiter appeared; and Miss Beaufort, in a tolerably collected voice, inquired if Mr. Constantine lived there.

"No, ma'am."

A cold dew stood on her forehead; but taking courage from a latent and last hope, she added, "I know that he has had letters directed to this place."

"O! I beg your pardon, ma'am!" returned the man, evidently recollecting himself; "I remember a person of that name has received letters from hence, but they were always fetched away by a little girl."

"And do you not know where he lives?"

"No, ma'am;" answered he, "yet some one else may; I will inquire."

Miss Beaufort bowed her head in token of acknowledgment, and sat shivering with suspense, until he returned, followed by another man.

"This person, ma'am," resumed he, "says he can tell you."

"Thank you, thank you!" cried Mary, then, blushing at her eagerness, she stopped, and drew back into the carriage.

"I cannot for certain," said the man, "but I know the girl very well by sight, who comes for the letters; and I have often seen her standing at the door of a chandler's shop, a good way down the lane. I think it is No. 5, or 6. I sent a woman there, who came after the same gentleman, about a fortnight ago. I dare say he lives there."

Miss Beaufort's expectations sunk again, when she found that she had nothing but a *dare say* to depend on; and, giving half a crown to each of her informers, she desired the coachman to drive as they would direct him.

Whilst the carriage drove down the lane, with a heart full of fears, she looked from side to side, almost believing that she should know, by intuition, the house which had contained Constantine. When the man checked his horses, and her eyes fell on the little mean dwelling of Mrs. Robson, she smothered a deep sigh.

"Can this be the house in which Constantine has lived? How comfortless!—And should it not," thought she, as the man got off his box to inquire, "whither shall I go for information?"

The appearance of Mrs. Robson, and her immediate affirmative to the question, "Are these Mr. Constantine's lodgings?" at once dispelled this last anxiety. Encouraged by the motherly expression of the good woman's manner, Mary begged leave to alight. Mrs. Robson readily offered her arm; and, with many apologies for the disor-

dered state of the house, led her up stairs to the room which had been the count's home.

Mary trembled violently; but, seeing that every thing depended on self command, with apparent tranquillity, she received the chair that was presented to her, and, turning her eyes from the books and drawings, which told her so truly in whose apartment she was, she desired Mrs. Robson, who continued standing, to be seated. The good woman obeyed; and, after some trepidation, she asked where Mr. Constantine was? Mrs. Robson coloured, and looking at her questioner for some time, as if doubting what to say, burst into tears.

Miss Beaufort's ready eyes were much inclined to flow in concert; but, subduing the strong emotions which shook her, she added, "I do not come hither out of impertinent curiosity. I have heard of the misfortunes of Mr. Constantine. I am well known to his friends."

"Dear lady!" cried the good woman, grasping at any prospect of succour to her benefactor; "If he has friends, whoever they are, tell them he is the noblest, most humane gentleman in the world. Tell them he has saved me and mine from the deepest want; and now he is sent to prison, because he cannot pay the cruel doctor who attended the poor dead general!"

"What, is his friend dead?" ejaculated Mary, unable to restrain the tears which now streamed over her face.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Robson; "Poor old gentleman! he is dead sure enough; and, Heaven knows, many have been the dreary hours the dear young man has watched by his pillow! he died in that room."

"Miss Beaufort's swimming eyes would not allow her to discern objects, through the open door of that apartment, within which the heart of Thaddeus had undergone such variety of misery. Forming an irresistible wish to know whether the deceased were any relation of Constantine, she paused a moment to compose the agitation which might betray her, and then asked.

"I thought, ma'am," replied Mrs. Robson, "that you said you knew his friends?"

"Only his English ones," returned Mary, a little confused at the suspicion which this answer implied; I imagined that this old gentleman might have been his father, or an uncle, or——"

"O no," interrupted Mrs. Robson, sorrowfully; "he has neither father, mother, nor uncle, in the wide world. He once told me that they were all dead, and that he saw them die. Alas! sweet soul! What a power of griefs he must have seen in his young life! But Heaven will favour him at last; for though he is in misfortune himself, he has been a blessing to the widow and the orphan!"

"Do you know the amount of his debts?" asked Miss Beaufort.

"Only thirty pounds," returned Mrs. Robson; "and for that they took him out of this room a week ago; and hurried him away without letting me know a word of the matter. I believe, to this hour, I should not have known where he was, if that brute, Mr Jackson, had not come to demand all that Mr. Constantine left in my care. But I would not let him have it; I told the man, if my lodger had filled my house with bags of gold, *he* should not touch a shilling; and then the ill-na-

tured wretch abused me, and told me Mr. Constantine was in Newgate."

"In Newgate!"

"Yes, madam. I immediately ran there, and found him more able to comfort me, than I was able to speak to him."

"Then be at rest, my good woman," returned Miss Beaufort, rising from her chair; "when you next hear of Mr. Constantine, he shall be at liberty. He has friends, who will not sleep till he is out of prison."

"May Heaven bless you and them, dear lady!" cried Mrs. Robson, weeping with joy, "for they will release the most generous heart alive."

Mary cast a wishful look on the drawings which stood on a bureau; then withdrawing her eyes with a deep sigh, she descended the stairs. At the street-door, she took Mrs. Robson's hand, and not relinquishing it until she was seated in the coach, pressed it warmly, and leaving within it a purse of twenty guineas, ordered the man to return whence he came.

Now that the temerity of going herself to learn the particulars of Mr. Constantine's fate had been achieved, determined as she was, not to close her eyes, whilst the man whom she valued above her life, remained a prisoner, and in sorrow, she thought it best to consult with Mrs. Dorothy respecting the speediest means of compassing his emancipation.

In Oxford-road, she desired the man to proceed to Harley-street. She alighted at lady Dundas's door, paid the coachman his fare, and stepped into the hall, before she perceived that a travelling carriage, belonging to her guardian, had driven away to afford room for her humble equipage.

"Is Sir Robert Somerset come to town?" she hastily inquired of the porter.

"No, madam; but Mr. Somerset is just arrived."

The next morning Miss Beaufort was in the drawing-room, and clasped within the arms of her cousin.

"Dear Mary!"—"Dear Pembroke!" were the first words which passed between these two affectionate friends.

Mrs. Dorothy, who doated on her nephew, taking his hand fondly, as he seated himself between her and his cousin, said, in a congratulatory voice, "Mary, our dear boy has come to town purposely to take us down."

"Yes, indeed," rejoined he; "my father is moped to death for want of you both. You know that I am a sad run-about. Lord Arun and Mr. Loftus have been gone these ten days to his lordship's aunt's in Bedfordshire: and Sir Robert is so completely weary of solitude, that he has commanded me," bowing to the other ladies, "to run off with all the fair inhabitants of this house, sooner than leave you behind."

"I shall be happy at another opportunity to visit Somerset Castle," returned lady Dundas; "but I am constrained to spend this summer in Dumbartonshire; I have not yet seen the estate my poor dear Sir Hector bought of the duke of Dumfries!"

Pembroke offered no attempt to shake this resolution. In the two or three morning calls, which he had made with Sir Robert Somerset on the rich widow, he saw sufficient to make him regard her arrogant vulgarity with disgust; and for her daughters, they were of too common a stamp to occupy his mind any longer than with a magic

lantern impression of a tall woman with bold eyes, and the prettiest little blue-eyed fairy he ever beheld.

After half an hour's conversation with this family group, Miss Beaufort sunk again into abstraction. During the first month of Mary's acquaintance with Thaddeus, she did not neglect to mention in her correspondence with Pembroke, having met with a very interesting and accomplished emigrant, in the quality of a tutor at lady Dundas's. But her cousin, in his replies, beginning to banter her on the plea of pity being allied to love, she gradually dropped all mention of his name, as she too truly found, by what insensible degrees the union had taken place within her own breast. She remembered these particulars, whilst a new method of attaining the desired end suggested itself; and determining, (however extraordinary her conduct might seem,) to rest on the rectitude of her motives, she resolved, that as a man must be the properest person to transact such a business with propriety, she would engage Pembroke for her agent, without troubling Mrs. Dorothy about the affair.

So deeply was she absorbed in these reflections, that, Somerset, observing her vacant eye fixed on the opposite wall, took her hand with an arch smile, and exclaimed,

"Mary! What is the matter? I hope, lady Dundas, you have not suffered any one to run away with her heart? You know I am her cousin, and it is my unalienable right."

Lady Dundas replied, that young ladies best knew their own secrets.

"That may be, madam," rejoined he, "but I won't allow Miss Beaufort to know any thing that

she does not transfer to me. Is not that true, Mary ?"

"Yes," whispered she, colouring; "and the sooner you afford me an opportunity to interest you in one, the more I shall be obliged to you."

Pembroke pressed her hand in token of assent; and a desultory conversation continuing for another half hour, Miss Beaufort, who dreaded the wasting of one minute in a day so momentous to her peace, sat uneasily, until her aunt proposed retiring to dress for dinner, and requested Pembroke to assist her up stairs.

When he returned to the drawing-room, to his extreme satisfaction he found that all the party were separated, excepting Miss Beaufort, who was standing by one of the windows, evidently lost in thought. He approached her, and taking her hand, led her back to the sofa she had quitted.

"Come, my dear cousin," said he, in an affectionate voice, "how can I oblige you ?"

Mary struggled with her confusion. Had she loved Thaddeus less, she found she could with greater ease have related the interest which she took in his fate. She tried to speak distinctly, and she accomplished it; although her burning cheek and downcast look told to the fixed eye of Pembroke, what she vainly attempted to conceal.

"You can, indeed, oblige me! You must remember a Mr. Constantine! I once mentioned him to you in my letters."

"I do, Mary. You thought him amiable !"

"He was the intimate friend of lady Tinemouth," returned she, striving to look up, but the piercing expression, which she met from the eyes of Somerset, beating hers down again, covered her

face and neck with deeper blushes: she panted for breath.

"Rely on me," said Pembroke, pitying her embarrassment, whilst he dreaded that her gentle heart had indeed become the victim of some accomplished and insidious foreigner, "Rely on me, my beloved cousin: consider me as a brother. If you have entangled yourself—"

Miss Beaufort guessed what he would say; and, interrupting him, added, with a more assured air, "No, Pembroke, I have no entanglements. I am going to ask your friendly assistance in behalf of a brave and unfortunate Polander." Pembroke reddened, and she went on. "Mr. Constantine is a gentleman. Lady Tinemouth tells me, he has been a soldier, and that he lost all his possessions in the ruin of his country. Her ladyship introduced him here: I have seen him often, and I know him to be worthy the esteem of every honourable heart. He is now in prison, in Newgate, for a debt of thirty pounds, and I ask you to go and release him? That is my request, my secret; and I confide in your discretion, that you will keep it, even from him."

"Dear, generous, lovely Mary!" cried Pembroke, kissing her hand, "it is thus that you always act! Possessed of all the softness of thy sex, dearest girl," added he, still more affectionately, "nature has not alloyed it with one particle of weakness!"

Miss Beaufort smiled and sighed: If to love tenderly, to be devoted, life and soul to one being, whom she considered as the most perfect work of creation, be weakness? Mary was the weakest of the weak; and, with a languid despondence at her heart, she was opening her lips to give some direc-

tions to her cousin, when the attentions of both were arrested by a shrill noise of speakers talking above stairs. Before the cousins had time to make an observation, the disputants descended towards the drawing-room with a violent clamour, and bursting open the door, presented the enraged figure of lady Dundas, followed by Diana, who, with a no less swollen countenance, was scolding vociferously, and dragging forward the weeping Euphemia.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Somerset, amazed at so extraordinary a scene, "What is the matter?"

Lady Dundas lifted up her clenched hand in a passion. "A jade! a hussy!" cried she, incapable to articulate more.

Miss Dundas, still grasping the hands of her struggling sister, broke out next, and turning furiously towards Mary, exclaimed, "You see, madam, what disgrace your ridiculous conduct to that vagabond foreigner has brought on our family! This bad girl has followed your example, and done worse; she has fallen in love with him!"

Miss Beaufort, shocked, and trembling at so rude an accusation, was unable to speak. Lost in wonder, and incensed at his cousin's goodness having been the dupe of imposition, Pembroke stood silent whilst lady Dundas took up the subject.

"Ay," cried she, shaking her daughter by the shoulder, "You little minx! if your sister had not picked up these abominable verses, which you chose to write on the absence of this beggarly fellow, I suppose you would have finished the business by running off with him. But you shall go down to Scotland, and be locked up for months.

I won't have Sir Hector Dundas's family disgraced by a daughter of mine."

"For pity's sake, lady Dundas," said Pembroke, stepping between her vulgar ladyship and the trembling Euphemia, "do compose yourself. I dare say your daughter is pardonable. In these cases, the fault in general lies with our sex. We are the seducers."

Mary was obliged to re-seat herself; and, with pale attention, she listened to the reply of the frightened Euphemia; who, half assured that her whim of creating a mutual passion in the breast of Thaddeus was no longer tenable, without either shame or remorse, exclaimed, "Indeed, Mr. Somerset, you are right. I never should have thought of Mr. Constantine, if he had not teazed me, every time he came, with his violent love."

Miss Beaufort rose hastily from her chair. Though Euphemia coloured at the suddenness of this motion, and the immediate flash which she met from her eye, she went on; "I know Miss Beaufort will deny it, because she thinks he is in love with her; but indeed, indeed, he has sworn a thousand times on his knees, that he was a Russian nobleman in disguise, and adored me above every one else in the world."

"Scoundrel!" cried Pembroke, inflamed with indignation at this double conduct. Afraid to read in the expressive countenance of Mary, her shame and horror at this discovery, he turned his eyes on her with trepidation; when, to his surprise, he beheld her standing, perfectly unmoved, by the side of the sofa from which she had arisen. She advanced with a calm step towards Euphemia; and taking hold of the hand, which concealed her face whilst uttering this last falsehood, she drew it

away ; and regarding her with a serene but penetrating look, " Euphemia !" said she, " you well know, that you are slandering an innocent and an unfortunate man. You know, that never in his life did he give you the slightest reason to suppose that he was attached to you ! And as for myself, I can also clear him of making professions to me. Upon the honour of my word, I declare," added she, addressing herself to the whole group, " that he never breathed a sentence to me, beyond mere respect. By this last deviation of Euphemia from truth, you may form an estimate how far the rest she has alleged deserves credit."

The young lady burst into a vehement passion of tears : " I will not be browbeat and insulted, Miss Beaufort !" cried she, taking refuge in noise, since right had deserted her ; " You know you would fight his battles though thick and thin, else you would not have fallen into fits yesterday, when I told you he was sent to jail."

This last assault struck Mary motionless ; and lady Dundas lifting up her hands, exclaimed, " Good Lord, keep me from the forward misses of these times ! As for you, Miss Euphemia," added she, seizing her daughter by the arm, " you shall leave town to-morrow morning. I will have no more tutoring and falling in love in my house ; and for you, Miss Beaufort," turning to Mary, who, having recovered herself, stood at a little distance, " I shall take care to warn Mrs. Dorothy Somerset to keep an eye over your conduct."

" Madam," replied she, indignantly, " I shall never do any thing which can dishonour either my family or myself ; and of that, Mrs. Dorothy Somerset is too well assured, to doubt for an instant,

even should calumny be as busy with me, as it has been injurious to Mr. Constantine."

Miss Beaufort walked towards the door. When she passed Mr. Somerset, who stood bewildered, and frowning beside Miss Dundas, she said, in a collected and decisive voice, "Pembroke, I shall leave the room, but remember, I do not release you from your engagement."

Staggered by the open firmness of her manner, he looked after her as she withdrew, and was almost inclined to believe, that she possessed the right side of the argument. Malice did not allow him to think so long. The moment the door closed on her, both the sisters fell on him pell-mell; and the prejudiced illiberality of the one, supported by the ready falsehoods of the other, soon dislodged all favourable impressions from the mind of Somerset, and filled him anew with displeasure.

In the midst of Diana's third harangue, Lady Dundas having ordered Euphemia to be taken to her chamber, Mr. Somerset was left alone more incensed than ever against Thaddeus, whom he now considered in the light of an adventurer, concealing his poverty, and perhaps his crimes, beneath a garb of lies. That such a character could, by means of his fine person, and a few meretricious talents, work himself into the confidence of Mary Beaufort, pierced her cousin to the soul; and as he mounted the stairs with an intent to seek her in her dressing-room, he almost resolved to refuse obeying her commands.

When he opened the room door, he found Miss Beaufort with his aunt. The instant he appeared, the ever benevolent face of Mrs. Dorothy contracted into a frown.

"Nephew!" cried she, "I shall not take it well of you if you give stronger credence to the passionate and vulgar assertions of lady Dundas and her daughters, than you choose to bestow on the tried veracity of your cousin Mary."

Pembroke was conscious, that if his countenance had been a faithful transcript of his mind, Miss Beaufort did not err in supposing that he believed the foreigner to be a villain. Knowing that it would be impossible for him to relinquish his reason, into what he now denominated the partial hands of his aunt and cousin, he persisted in his opinion, to both the ladies, that their unsuspicious natures had been rendered subservient to knavery and artifice.

"I would not, willingly, my dear madam," said he, addressing Mrs. Dorothy, "think so meanly of your sex, as to imagine, that an atrocity can exist in the female heart, which could give birth to cruel and unprovoked calumnies against an innocent man. I cannot suspect the Miss Dundases of such needless guilt; particularly poor Euphemia, whom I pity. Lady Dundas forced me to read her verses; and they were too full of love and regret for this adventurer, to come from the same breast which could wantonly blacken his character. Such wicked inconsistencies in so young a woman are not half so probable, as that you, my dear aunt and cousin, have been deceived."

"Nephew," returned the old lady, "you are very peremptory. Methinks a little more lenity of opinion would better become your youth! *I* knew nothing of this unhappy man's present distress, until Miss Beaufort mentioned it to me; but before she breathed a word in his favour, I had

conceived a very high respect for his merits: from the first hour in which I saw him, I gathered by his deportment and conversation, that they were far above his fortunes. I thought so; I still think so; and, notwithstanding all which the Dundases may choose to fabricate, I am determined to believe the assertions of an honest countenance."

Pembroke smiled, whilst he forced his aunt's reluctant hand into his, and said, "I see, my dear madam, that you are bigoted to the idol of your own fancy! I do not in the least doubt this Mr. Constantine's enchantments; but you must pardon me if I keep my senses at liberty. I shall think of him, as I could almost swear he deserves, although I am aware that I hazard your affection by my firmness." He then turned to Mary, who, with a swelling and distressed heart, was standing by the chimney; "Forgive me, my dearest cousin," continued he, addressing her in a softened voice; "that I am forced to appear harsh. It is the first time I ever dissented from you; it is the first time I ever thought you prejudiced!"

Miss Beaufort drew the back of her hand over her glistening eyes. All the tender affections of Pembroke's bosom smote him at once; and throwing his arms round his cousin's waist, he strained her to his breast, and added, "Ah! why, dear girl, must I love you better for thus giving me pain? Every way, my darling Mary is more estimable. Even now whilst I oppose you, I am sure, that though your goodness is abused, it was cheated into error, by the affectation of honourable calamities!

Miss Beaufort thought, "that if the prudence of reserve and decorum dictates silence in some cir-

cumstances, in others, a prudence of an higher order would justify her in declaring her sentiments." Accordingly, she withdrew from the clasping arms of Mr. Somerset ; and whilst her beautiful figure seemed to dilate into more than its usual dignity, she mildly replied,

"Think what you please, Pembroke ; I shall not contend with you : Mr. Constantine is of a nature not to be hidden by obscurity ; his character will defend itself : and all that I have to add is this, I do not release you from your promise. Could a woman transact the affair with propriety, I would not keep you to so disagreeable an office ; but I have passed my word to myself, that I will neither '*slumber* nor *sleep*,' till he is out of prison." She put a pocket-book into Pembroke's hand, and added, "Take that, my dear cousin ; and without suffering a syllable to transpire, by which he may suspect who served him, accomplish what I have desired."

"I will obey you, Mary," returned he, looking grave ; "but I am sorry that such rare enthusiasm was not awakened by a worthier object. When you see me again, I hope I shall be enabled to say that your ill-placed generosity is satisfied."

"Fie, nephew, fie !" cried Mrs. Dorothy, "I could not have supposed you capable of conferring a favour so ungraciously."

Mr. Somerset, pained at what he called the obstinate infatuation of Miss Beaufort : and, if possible, more chagrined by what he considered the blind and absurd encouragement of his aunt, lost the whole of her last reprimand in his hurry to quit the room.

Disturbed, displeased, and anxious, he stepped into a hackney-coach ; and, ordering it to drive to Newgate, determined to go through the business without exposing himself to an interview with a man whom he condemned as an artful and unprincipled villain.

CHAP. XI.

The first week of the count's confinement was rendered in some degree tolerable, by the daily visits of Mrs. Robson; who, having brought his drawing materials, enabled him, through the means of the printseller, to purchase some civility from the brutal and hardened people who were his gaolers. After the good woman had performed her diurnal kindness, Thaddeus used to turn to the sad circumference of his miserable apartment to seek amusement. When his pencil had accomplished its task, it wearied him: When he took up a book, having read it before, it failed to engage him. He possessed nothing to beguile the tedious day, and more tedious night. His spirit was in solitude; in the most dismal solitude; banished and shut out from all that could render life desirable.

The elasticity and enterprise of soul, inherent in youth, renders no calamity so difficult to be borne, as that which fetters its best years and most active virtues within the walls of a prison. Thaddeus felt this benumbing conviction in every pulse of his ardent and energetic heart. He retraced all that he had been. He looked on what he was. Though he had reaped glory when a boy, his '*noon of manhood*,' his evening sun was to waste its light, and set in captivity.

At short and distant intervals, such melancholy reveries gave place to the pitying image of Mary Beaufort. It sometimes visited him in the day, it always was his companion during night. He courted her lovely idea, as a spell that for a while

stole him from painful reflections. With an entranced soul, he recalled every lineament of her beautiful face, every dissolving note of that voice, which had hurried him into the rashness of touching her hand. One moment he pressed her gold chain closer to his heart, almost believing what lady Tinemouth had insinuated; the next, he would sigh over his credulity, and return with despondent, though equally intense love, to her bewitching recollection.

The more he meditated on the purity of her manners; the elevated principles to which he could trace her actions; and, above all, the benevolent confidence with which she had ever treated him, (a man contemned by one part of her acquaintance, and merely received on trust by the remainder,) the more he found reasons to admire her character and adore herself. When he drew a comparison between Miss Beaufort, and women of the same quality, whom he had seen in England and in other countries, he contemplated with delighted wonder, that spotless mind, which having passed through the various dangers annexed to wealth and fashion, still bore itself uncontaminated. She was beautiful, and she did not regard it; she was accomplished, but she did not attempt a display: what she acquired from education, the graces so incorporated with her native intelligence, that the perfection of her character seemed to have been stamped at once, by the beneficent hand of Providence.

Never were her numberless attractions so fascinating to Thaddeus, as when he witnessed the generous eagerness with which, forgetful of her own almost unparalleled talents, she pointed out merit, and dispensed applause to the deserving,

Miss Beaufort's nature was gentle and benevolent; but it was likewise distinguishing, and animated. Whilst the count saw that the urbanity of her disposition made her politeness universal, he perceived, that neither rank, riches, nor splendour, could extract from her bosom, one spark of that lambent flame, which streamed from her heart, like fire to the sun, towards the united glory of genius and virtue.

He dwelt on her lovely, unsophisticated character, with an enthusiasm bordering on idolatry. He recollected that she had been educated by the mother of Pembroke Somerset; and, turning from the double remembrance, with a sigh, fraught with all the bitterness and sweetness of love, he acknowledged, how much wisdom (which includes virtue) gives spirit and immortality to beauty; "Yes," cried he, "it is the fragrance of the flower, which lives after the bloom is withered."

From the like seducing day-dreams, Thaddeus was one evening awakened by the entrance of the jailer into his cell. The man presented a sealed paper, and told him that he brought it from a stranger, who, having paid the debts for which he was confined, immediately withdrew, desiring that the packet might be delivered to Mr. Constantine.

Scarcely crediting this information, Thaddeus hastily opened the letter, hoping that it might throw some light on his benefactor: a blank cover, enclosing notes to the amount of fifty pounds, presented itself. Surprised at this, he ordered the man to leave him, who, without much ceremony, was staring at the money over his shoulder; and sitting down, he tried to conjecture, who could have

acted so generously, and yet be so careful to conceal the donor.

He had seen sufficient proofs of a heedless want of charity in Miss Euphemia Dundas, to lead him to suppose, that she could not be so munificent and solicitous of secresy. Besides, how could she have learnt his situation? He thought it was impossible: and that impossibility compelled an erratic hope, of his present liberty's having sprung from the friendship of Miss Beaufort, to pass by him with painful swiftness.

"Gracious Heaven!" cried he, starting from his chair, "it is the indefatigable spirit of lady Sara Roos, that I recognise in this deed! The generous, but unhappy interest which she yet takes in my fate has discovered my last misfortune, and thus seeks to relieve me!"

The moment he conceived this supposition, he believed it; and, taking up a pen, with a grateful, though disturbed soul, he addressed to her the following guarded note.

"*To the Right Honourable Lady Sara Roos.*

"An unfortunate exile, who is already overpowered by a sense of not having deserved the notice which lady Sara Roos has deigned to take of his misfortunes, was this morning liberated from prison in a manner so generous and delicate, that he can ascribe the act to no other, than the noble heart of her ladyship.

"The object of this bounty, bending under the weight of obligations which he cannot repay, begs permission to re-enclose the bills which lady Sara's agent transmitted to him; but, as the deed which procures his freedom cannot be recalled, he accepts,

with the most grateful emotions, that new instance of her ladyship's goodness.

"*Newgate.*"

Thaddeus dispatched the letter by a porter; and was preparing another, to acquaint Mrs. Robson of his release, when the good woman made her appearance. She hastened up to him with an animated countenance, and exclaimed before he had time to speak, "Dear Sir! I have seen a dear sweet lady, who promised not to sleep till you are out of this horrid place!"

The suspicions of the count, that his benefactress was indeed lady Sara Roos, were now confirmed: seating his landlady in the only chair which furnished the apartment; to satisfy her humility, he took his station on the table, and then said, "The lady has already fulfilled her engagement; I am free; and only wait for an answer to my acknowledgments before I quit the prison."

At this assurance, the delighted Mrs. Robson, crying and laughing by turns, did not cease her ejaculations of joy, until the messenger, who had taken the letter to St. James's Place, returned with a reply written by her ladyship, and evidently blotted with tears. Thaddeus took out the re-enclosed bills with a flushed cheek, and read as follows:

"I cannot be mistaken in recognising the proud and high soul'd Constantine, in the writer of the lines which I hold in my hand. Could any thing have imparted to me more comfort, than your generous belief, that there is indeed some virtue left in my wretched and repentant heart, it would have arisen from the consciousness of having been the happy person, who has succoured you in your dis-

tress. But no; that enjoyment was beyond my deserving. The bliss of being the lightener of your sorrows was reserved by Heaven for a less criminal creature. I did not even know that you were in prison. Since our dreadful parting, I have never dared to inquire after you; and much as it might console me, to serve one so truly valued, I will not insult your nice honour, by offering any further instance of my friendship, than what will evince my soul's gratitude to your prayers, and my acquiescence with the commands of duty.

"My husband is here, without perceiving the ravages, which misery and remorse have made in my unhappy heart. Time, perhaps, may render me less unworthy of his tenderness: at present, I detest myself.

"I return the bills; you may safely use them, for they never were mine.

"S. R."

The noble heart of Thaddeus bled over every line of this letter. He saw that it bore a stamp of truth, which did not leave him a moment in doubt that he owed his release to some other hand. Whilst he folded it up, his suspicions next lighted on lady Tinemouth. He had received one short letter from her ladyship, since her departure, mentioning Maria's staying in town to meet Mr. Montresor; Miss Beaufort's detention on account of Mrs. Dorothy's accident, and closing with the intelligence of her own arrival at the Wold. He was struck with the idea, that as he delayed answering this letter, in consequence of his late embarrassment, she must have made inquiries after him; and probably Miss Egerton was the lady who visited Mrs. Robson; and, finding the infor-

mation true, had executed the countess's commission to obtain his release.

According to these suppositions, he questioned his landlady about the appearance of the lady whom she had seen. Mrs. Robson replied, "She was rather tall, but so wrapped up, I could neither see her face nor figure, though I am certain, from the softness of her voice, she must be both young and handsome. Sweet creature! I am sure she wept two or three times. Besides, she is the most charitable soul alive, next to you, Sir, for she gave me a purse with nineteen guineas; and she told me, that she knew your honour's English friends."

This narration, substantiating his hope of lady Tinemouth's being his benefactress, that the kind Maria was her agent, and the gentleman who defrayed the debt, Mr. Montresor, he was easier under an obligation, which a mysterious liberation would have doubled. He knew the countess's maternal love for him. To reject her present benefaction would be to sacrifice gratitude to an excessive and haughty delicacy. Convinced, *that nothing can be great, that it is great to despise*, he no longer hesitated to accept lady Tinemouth's bounty, but smothered in his breast, the embers of a proud, repulsive ardour, which having burst forth in the first hour of his misfortunes, was ever ready to consume any wish that might oppress him with the weight of obligation.

Thaddeus quitted his cell. He ordered a coach to the great gate of Newgate; and with thankfulness to Heaven, for again being permitted to taste the wholesome breeze of a free atmosphere, handed his delighted landlady into the vehicle.

So true it is, that advantages are only appreciated by comparison, when the count re-entered

his humble apartment in St. Martin's-lane, he considered it a palace of luxury, opposed to the dungeon he had left.

"Ah!" cried Mrs. Robson, pointing to a chair, "there is the very seat in which that dear lady sat! Sweet creature! If I had known that I durst believe all she promised, I would have fallen on my knees, and kissed her feet, for bringing back your dear self!"

"I thank you, my good madam," returned Thaddeus, with a smile, and a tear at such ardent demonstration of affection; "but where is little Nancy, that I may shake hands with her?"

The child welcomed the count with those animated expressions of joy, inseparable from a good and unexperienced heart. It being late, he retired at an early hour to his pillow, where he found that repose, which had been sought in vain, within the gloomy and (he supposed) eternal walls of a prison.

In the morning, he was awakened by the light footsteps of his pretty waiting-maid entering the front room. His chamber door being open, he asked her what was the hour? she replied, nine o'clock; adding that she brought a letter, which one of the waiters from Slaughter's coffee-house had just left, with the information that he did so by the orders of a footman in rich livery.

Thaddeus desired that it might be given to him. The child obeyed, and quitted the room. He saw that the superscription was in Miss Dundas's hand; and opening it with pleasure, because every thing interested him which came from the house which contained Mary Beaufort, to his amazement and consternation, he read the following passionate and intemperate lines:

"*To Mr. Constantine.*

"Mr. Constantine,

"By a miraculous circumstance, this morning, your deep and daring plan of villany has been discovered to lady D—— and myself. The deluded victim, whom your arts and falsehoods would have seduced to dishonour her family by connecting herself with a vagabond, has at length seen through her error, and now detests you as much as ever your insufferable presumption could have hoped that she would distinguish you with regard. Thanks be to Heaven! you are completely exposed! This young woman of fashion (whose name I will not trust in the same page with yours) has made a full confession of your villanous seductions; of her own reprehensible weakness, in ever having deigned to listen to so low a creature. She desires me to assure you, that she hates you; and commands you never again to attempt the insolence of appearing in her sight. Indeed, this is the language of every soul in this house, lady D——, Mrs. D——S——, Miss B——, besides that of

"D——D——.

"*Harley-street.*"

Thaddeus read this ridiculous letter twice, before he could perfectly comprehend its meaning. In a paroxysm of indignation at the vile subterfuge under which he did not doubt that Euphemia had screened some accidental discovery of her absurd passion, he hastily threw on his clothes, and determined, though in defiance of Miss Dundas's mandates, to fly to Harley-street, and clear himself in the eyes of Miss Beaufort, and her venerable aunt.

Having flown rather than walked, he arrived in sight of lady Dundas's house, just as a coach, full of her ladyship's maids and packages drove from the door. Hurrying up the step, he asked the porter who was standing in the hall, if Mrs. Dorothy Somerset were at home.

"No," replied the man; "she and Miss Beaufort, with Miss Dundas and Mr. Somerset, went out of town this morning by eight o'clock; and my lady and Miss Euphemia, about an hour ago, set off for Dumbarton in Scotland, where they mean to stay all the summer."

At this information, which seemed to be the sealing of his condemnation with Mary, the heart of Thaddeus was pierced to the core. Unacquainted, until this moment, with the torments attending the calumniated, he could scarcely subdue the tempest in his breast, when forced to receive the conviction, that the woman whom he loved above all the world, now regarded him as not merely a villain, but the meanest of villains.

He returned home indignant and agitated. The knowledge that Pembroke Somerset had probably listened to the falsehoods of Euphemia, without suggesting one word in defence of him, who once was his friend, inflicted a pang more deadly than the rest. Shutting himself within his apartment, tossed and tortured in soul, he traversed the room, until, resolving to seek redress from the advice of lady Tinemouth, he descended the stairs, and telling Mrs. Robson, that he should leave London next morning for Lincolnshire, begged her not to be uneasy on his account, as he went on business, and would return in a few days.

The good woman almost wept at this intelligence; and when she saw him depart followed the wheels of the stage coach with sighs and blessings. His long journey passed in resentful reveries, and affectionate anticipations of the moment, in which he should pour out his gratitude to the maternal tenderness of lady Tinemouth, and learn from her delicacy and experience, how to efface from the minds of Mrs. Dorothy Somerset and her lovely niece, sentiments of him, so dishonouring, torturing, and false.

CHAP. XII.

The porter at lady Dundas's was strictly correct in his account, respecting the destination of the dispersed members of her ladyship's household.

Whilst Pembroke Somerset was sullenly executing his forced act of benevolence at Newgate, Miss Dundas suddenly took it into her ever scheming head, to compare the merits of Somerset's rich expectancy, with the pennyless certainty of Lascelles. She considered, how high the wife of a baronet stood in the train of precedence, over the humble *cara sposa* of a man, owning no other rank, than a reflected lustre, shot from the coronet of an elder brother. Lady Somerset, she thought, would be a prettier salutation, than the empty courtesy of Honourable. Besides, Pembroke was very handsome: Lascelles, only tolerably so: indeed some women had presumed to call him ugly; but they were odd mortals, who, not believing the *metempsychosis* doctrine of the taylor and his decorating adjuncts, could not comprehend, that although a mere human creature can have no such property, a man of fashion may possess an *elixir vitæ*, which makes age youth, deformity beauty, and even transforms vice into virtue.

In spite of remembrance, which reminded Diana, how often, amongst a little bevy of females, she had contended with acrimony, that all Mr. Lascelles' teeth were his own; that his nose was not a bit too long, being an exact *fac simile* of the same feature, which reared its sublime curve over the capacious mouth of his noble brother lord Castle-Conway; notwithstanding this, the Pythagorean

pretentions of fashion began to lose their ascendancy ; and, in the recesses of her mind, when Miss Dundas compared the light elegance of Pembroke's figure, with the heavy limbs of her present lover ; Pembroke's dark and ever animated eyes, with the gooseberry orbs of Lascelles, she dropped the parallel ; and resolving to captivate the heir of Somerset-Castle, admitted no remorse at jilting the brother of Castle-Conway.

To this end, before Pembroke's return from Newgate, Diana told her mother of her intention to accompany Mrs. Dorothy down to the baronet's ; where she would remain, until her ladyship should think, that Euphemia might be trusted to rejoin her in town. Neither Mrs. Dorothy nor Miss Beaufort liked this arrangement ; and with an aching heart, the latter prepared to take her seat next morning, at an early hour, in the travelling equipage, which was to convey them all into Leicestershire.

At supper, Pembroke sullenly informed his cousin of the success of her commands ;—that Mr. Constantine was free. This assurance, though imparted with so ungracious an air, laid her head with less distraction on her pillow : and as she stepped into Sir Robert's carriage next day enabled her, with more ease, to deck her lips with smiles. She felt that the penetrating eyes of Mr. Somerset were never withdrawn from her face ; offended with his perverseness, and their scrutiny, she tried to baffle their inspection. She attempted gaiety when she gladly would have wept. But when the coach mounted the top of Highgate-hill, and discovered a last view of that city, which contained the being, whose happiness was the sole object of her thoughts and prayers, she leaned out of

the window, to hide a tear which she could not repress; feeling that another and another would start, she complained of the dust, and pulling her veil over her eyes, drew back into the corner of the carriage. The trembling of her voice and hands during the performance of this little artifice, too well explained to Pembroke what was passing in her mind. At once dispelling the gloom which shrouded his countenance, he turned towards her with compassionate tenderness in his words and looks; he called her attention, by degrees, to the happy domestic scene she was to meet at the castle; and thus gradually softening her displeasure, into the easy conversation of reciprocal affection, he rendered the remainder of their long journey less irksome.

When at the end of the second day, Miss Beaufort found herself in the old avenue leading to the base of the hill which sustains the revered walls of Somerset-Castle, a mingled emotion took possession of her breast; and when the carriage arrived at the foot of the highest terrace, she sprung impatiently out of it, and hastening up the stone stairs into the front hall, met her uncle at the door of the breakfast parlour where he held out his arms to receive her.

"My Mary! My darling!" cried he, embracing her now wet cheek, and straining her throbbing bosom to his own, "Why, my dear love," added he, almost carrying her into the room, "I am afraid that this visit to town has injured your nerves! Whence arises this agitation?"

She knew that it had injured her peace; and, now that the flood-gates of her long repelled tears were opened, it was beyond her art, or the soothings of her affectionate uncle, to stay them. A

moment afterwards, her cousin entered the room, followed by Mrs. Dorothy and Miss Dundas. Miss Beaufort hastily rose to conceal what she could not check, and kissing Sir Robert's hand, asked permission to retire, under the pretence of regaining those spirits which had been dissipated by the fatigues of her journey.

In her own chamber, she did, indeed, struggle to recover herself. She shuddered at the impetuosity of her emotions, when once abandoned of their reins ; and, resolved from this hour to hold a stricter guard over the consequences of her ill-fated passion.

She sat down in the window of her apartment ; and, looking down the extensive vale of Somerset, watched the romantic wanderings of the Witham, winding its course through the domains of the castle, and nourishing the roots of those immense oaks, which still wave their expanded branches over its quiet stream. She reflected on the revolution which had taken place in her mind, since she walked on its banks, the evening that preceded her visit to London. Then, she was free as air, and gay as the lark ; each object was bright and lovely to her eyes : hope seemed to woo her from every green slope, every remote dingle : all nature breathed of joy, because her own breast was the abode of gladness Now, all continued the same, but she was changed. Surrounded by beauty, she acknowledged its presence ; the sweetness of the flowers bathed her senses in fragrance ; the setting sun, gilding the heights, shed a yellow glory over the distant hills ; the birds were hailing the fallen due which spangled every leaf ; she gazed around, and sighed heavily when she

said to herself, "Even in this paradise I shall be wretched. Alas! my heart is far away! My soul lingers about one, whom I may never more behold! about one, who may soon cease to remember that such a being as Mary Beaufort is in existence. He will leave England!" cried she, raising her hands and eyes to the glowing heavens. "He will live, he will die, far, far from me! In a distant land he will wed another, whilst I shall know no wish that strays from him."

Whilst she indulged in these soliloquies, she forgot both Sir Robert and her resolution, until he sent her maid to beg, that if she were better, she would come down and make tea for him. At this summons, Miss Beaufort dried her eyes, and descended with an assumed serenity, to the saloon, where the family were assembled. The baronet having greeted Miss Dundas with an hospitable welcome, seated himself between his sister and his son; and, whilst he received his favourite beverage from the hands of his beloved niece, he found that comfort once more re-entered his bosom.

Sir Robert Somerset was a man whose appearance alone attracted respect. His person bore the stamp of dignity: and his manners, which possessed the exquisite polish of travel, secured him universal esteem. Though little beyond fifty, the various perplexities which distressed his youth, not only rendered his hair prematurely grey, but by clouding his once brilliant eyes with thoughtfulness, marked his aspect with old age and melancholy. The baronet's entrance into gay life was celebrated for wit and vivacity: He was the animating spirit of every party; when, strange to tell, an inexplicable metamorphosis took place.

Soon after his return from abroad, his marriage with Miss Beaufort (a woman whom he loved to madness) taking place, excess of happiness seemed to change his nature, and gave his character a gradual tinge of sadness. After his wife's death, the alteration in his mind produced still more extraordinary effects, and shewed itself more than once in all the terrors of approaching insanity.

The latest attack of that kind which assailed him was about the middle of the last winter; it seized him under the appearance of a swoon, as he sat reading the newspaper at breakfast; he was carried to bed, and awoke in a delirium, which threatened, either immediate death, or the total extinction of his intellects. However, neither of these dreads being confirmed, in the course of several weeks, to the wonder of every body, he recovered both his health and his sound mind. Notwithstanding this happy event, the circumstances of his danger, so deeply affected his family, that he continued to be an object of very anxious attention. Indeed solicitude did not terminate with them: the munificence of his disposition, having spread itself through every county in which he owned a rood of land, as many prayers ascended for the repose of his spirit, as ever petitioned Heaven, from the mouths of '*monkish beadsmen*,' in favour of power or virtue.

Since the demise of lady Somerset, this excellent man drew all his comfort from the amiable qualities of his son Pembroke. Sometimes in his livelier hours, which came '*like angel visits, few and far between*,' he amused himself with the playfulness of the little earl of Arun, the pompous erudition of Mr. Loftus (who was become his lord-

ship's tutor) and with giving occasional entertainments to the gentry in his neighbourhood.

Of all the personages contained within this circle, (which the hospitality of Sir Robert extended to a circumference of thirty miles,) lord Berrington was the most respected.

The numerous visitants that attended the Somerset-hunt were too gay to be admitted with intimacy. A son of one of these itinerant families, (which, ever on the full chace of pleasure, had fixed itself at Wood-hill Lodge, on the right of the little town of Grantham,) by calling at the castle, soon after the arrival of the London party, caused a trifling change in its social arrangement.

When Richard Shafto was ushered into the saloon, he nodded to Sir Robert, and, turning his back on the ladies, told Pembroke, that he had ridden to Somerset, on purpose to bring him to Woodhill Lodge.

"Upon my soul," cried he, "If you don't come, I will leave my mother. Would you believe it, that on account of Sir Hallerand having gone out plenipotentiary to some damned place on the continent, she has taken into her head to rusticate till his return? Upon my soul, I am moped to death! There is not a creature, but yourself, within twenty miles, to whom I would speak; not a man worth a sixpence! I wish to heaven, my father had broken his neck, before he accepted that rascally embassy, which encumbers me with the charge of an old woman!"

After this dutiful wish, which brought down a weighty admonition from Mrs. Dorothy, the young gentleman promised to beg her pardon for his filial irreverence, provided that she could persuade Pembroke to accompany him to the lodge. Mr. Somer-

set did not shew much alacrity in his consent; but purposely to rid his family of such a noisy guest, he rose from his chair, and acquiescing in the sacrifice of a few days to good-nature, bade his father farewell, and gave orders for a ride to Grantham.

As soon as the gentlemen left the saloon, Miss Dundas ran up stairs, and, from her dressing-room window in the west tower, pursued the steps of their horses, as they cantered down the winding steep, into the high-road. An abrupt angle of the hill hiding them at once from her view, she turned round with a toss of the head, and, flinging herself into her chair, exclaimed, "Now I shall be bored to death by this abominably stupid family! I wish the devil had taken Shafto before he thought of coming hither!"

In consequence of the humour, which engendered the above no very flattering compliment, to the society at the castle, Miss Dundas descended to the dining-room, with sulky looks and a chilling air. She ate what the baronet laid on her plate, with an indolent appetite; cut her meat carelessly, and dragged the vegetables over the table-cloth. Mrs. Dorothy coloured at this indifference to the usual neatness of her damask covers; but Miss Dundas was so completely in the sullens, that, heedless of any other feelings than her own, she continued to pull and knock about the things just as her ill humour dictated.

The petulance of this lady's behaviour did not in the least assimilate with the customary decorum of Sir Robert's table; and, when the cloth was drawn, he could not refrain from expressing his concern, that Somerset Castle appeared so little calculated to afford satisfaction to a daughter of lady

Dundas. Miss Dundas attempted some awkward declaration, that she never was more amused, never happier. But the small credit which Sir Robert gave to her assertion was fully warranted the next morning, by the ready manner in which she accepted a casual invitation, to spend the ensuing day and night at lady Shafto's. Her ladyship called on Mrs. Dorothy, and intending to have a party in the evening, invited the two young ladies to return with her to Grantham, and be her guests for a week. Miss Beaufort, whose spirits were far from tranquillized, declined her civility; but, with a gleam of pleasure, she heard it accepted by Miss Dundas, who departed with her ladyship for the lodge.

Whilst the enraptured Diana, all life and glee, bowled along with lady Shafto, anticipated the delight of once more seating herself at the elbow of Pembroke Somerset, Mary Beaufort, relieved from a load of ill-requited attentions, walked out into the Park, to enjoy, in solitude, the intoxicating sorrow of thinking on the unhappy and far distant Constantine. Regardless of the way, her footsteps, though robbed of elasticity by nightly watching and daily regret, led her beyond the park, to the ruined church of Woolthorpe, its southern boundary. Her eyes were fixed on the opposite horizon. It was the extremity of Leicestershire; and far, far behind those hills, was that London which contained the object dearest to her soul. The wind seemed scarcely to breathe as it floated towards her; but it came from that quarter; and, believing it laden with every sweet which love can fancy, she threw back her veil to inhale its balm; then blaming herself for such baby weakness, she

turned, blushing, homewards, and wept at, what she thought, her unreasonably tenacious passion.

The arrival of Miss Dundas at the lodge was communicated to the two young men on their return from a traverse on foot, of half the country in quest of game. The news drew an oath from Shafto; but rather pleased Somerset, who augured some amusement from her attempts at wit and judgment. Tired to death, and dinner being over when they entered, with ravenous appetites they devoured their uncomfortable meal in a remote room; then, throwing themselves along the sofas, they yawned, and slept for near two hours.

Pembroke waking first, suddenly jumped on the floor, and shaking his disordered clothes, exclaimed, "Shafto! Get up. This is abominable! Efaith, I cannot help thinking, that if we spend one half of our days in pleasure, and the other in lolling off its fatigues, we shall have passed thro' life more to our shame than our profit!"

"Then you may take the shame, and leave me the profit;" cried his companion, turning himself round: "so good night to you."

Pembroke rang the bell. A servant entered.

"What o'clock is it?"

"Eight, Sir."

"Who are above?"

"My lady, Sir, and a large party of ladies."

"There now!" cried Shafto, yawning and kicking out his legs. "You surely won't go to be bored with such damned maudlin company?"

"I choose to join your mother;" replied Pembroke. "Are there any gentlemen, Stephen?"

"One, Sir; doctor Denton."

"Confound you!" roared Shafto, "what do you stand jabbering there for! You won't let me

sleep. Can't you send away the fellow, and go look yourself?"

"I will, if you can persuade yourself to rise off that sofa, and come with me."

"May the devil catch me if I do! Get about your business, and leave me to mine."

"You are incorrigible, Shafto!" returned Pembroke, as he closed the door.

He went up stairs to change his dress; and before he gained the second flight, he resolved, not to spend two other whole days in the company of such an ignorant, unmannerly cub.

On Mr. Somerset's entrance into lady Shafto's drawing-room, he saw many ladies: but only one gentleman, who was the before-mentioned Dr. Denton; a poor, shallow-headed parasitical animal. Pembroke, having seen enough of him, to despise his pretensions both to science and sincerity, returned his wide smirk and eager inquiries, with a ceremonious bow, and took his seat by the side of the now delighted Miss Dundas. The vivid spirits of Diana, which she used all her art to render peculiarly sparkling when he made his appearance, entertained him;—when compared with the insipid sameness of her ladyship, or the brutal ribaldry of her son, her mirth was wit, and her remarks wisdom.

"Dear Mr. Somerset!" cried she, "how good you are to break this sad solemnity. I vow, until you shewed your face, I thought the days of paganism were revived, and that, lacking men, we were assembled here to celebrate the mysteries of the *Bona Dea*."

"Lacking men!" replied he, smiling, "You have overlooked the assiduous doctor Denton?"

"O, no; that is a cameleon in man's clothing. He breathes air, he eats air, he emits air; and a most pestilential breath it is; only observe how he is pouring nonsense into the ear of yonder sable statue."

Pembroke directed his eyes as Miss Dundas desired him; they fell on doctor Denton, who stood whispering, and bowing before a lady in black, who sat almost concealed by the window curtain. The lady put up her lip, the doctor proceeded; she frowned, he would not be daunted; the lady rose from her seat, and slightly bending her head, crossed the room. Whilst Mr. Somerset was contemplating her majestic figure, and fine, though pale features, Miss Dundas touched his arm, and smiling satirically, repeated, in an affected voice:

"Hail, pensive Nun! devout and holy!
"Hail, divinest Melancholy!"

"If she be melancholy," returned Pembroke, unconsciously sighing, "I would forever say,

"Hence, unholy Mirth, of Folly born!"

Miss Dundas reddened. She never liked this interesting woman, who was not only too handsome for competition, but possessed an understanding, whose temper would not tolerate ignorance and presumption. Diana's ill-natured impertinence having several times received deserved chastisement from that quarter, she was vexed to the soul, when Pembroke closed his animated response with the question, "Who is she?"

Miss Dundas, rather too bitterly for the success of her design on his heart, iterated his words, and

then answered, "Why, she is crazed. She lives in a place called Harrowby Abbey, at the top of that hill;" continued she, pointing through the opposite window, to a distant rising ground, on which the moon was shining brightly; "and, I am told, frightens the cottagers out of their wits by her midnight strolls."

Hardly knowing how to credit this wild account, Pembroke asked his informer if she were serious.

"Never more so. Her eyes are uncommonly wild."

"You must be jesting," returned he; "they seem perfectly reasonable."

Miss Dundas laughed. "Like Hamlet's, they '*know not seems, but have that within which passeth shew!*' Believe me, she is mad enough for bedlam; and of that I could soon convince you. I wonder how lady Shafto thought of inviting her at all."

"Well," cried Pembroke, "if those features announce madness, I shall never admire a look of sense again."

"Bless us," exclaimed Miss Dundas, "you are wonderfully struck! Don't you see she is old enough to be your mother?"

"That may be," answered he, smiling; "nevertheless, she is one of the most lovely women I ever beheld. Come, tell me her name."

"I will satisfy you in a moment," rejoined Diana; "and then away with your rhapsodies! She is the very countess of Tinemouth, who brought, as her most particular friend, that vagabond foreigner to our house, who would have run off with Phemy."

"Lady Tinemouth!" exclaimed Pembroke, "I never saw her before. My ever lamented mother

met her, whilst I was abroad, and she esteemed her highly. Pray present me to her !"

"Impossible," replied Diana, vexed at the turn which his curiosity had taken ; "I wrote to her about the insidious wretch, and now we don't speak."

"Then I will introduce myself," answered he : he was moving away, when Miss Dundas (whose delight lay in tormenting those whom she could not subjugate,) caught hold of his arm, and, by some attempts at badinage and raillery, held him in his place, until the countess made her farewell courtesy to lady Shafto, and the door was closed.

Disappointed at this manœuvre, Pembroke re-seated himself ; and wondering why his aunt and cousin had not heard of her ladyship's arrival at Harrowby, he determined to wait on her next day. Regardless of every word which the provoked Diana addressed to him, he remained silent and meditating until the loud voice of Shafto, roaring in his ear, made him turn suddenly round. Miss Dundas tried to laugh at his reverie, though she knew that such a flagrant instance of inattention was death to her hopes ; but Pembroke, not inclined to partake in the jest, coolly asked his bearish companion what he wanted ?

"Nothing, upon my soul," cried he, "but to hear you speak. What the devil were you looking at on the carpet ? Miss Dundas tells me, that you have lost your heart, to yonder grim countess, whom my mother wanted me to gallant up the hill ?"

"Shafto !" answered Pembroke, rising from his chair, "you cannot be speaking of lady Tinemouth."

"Efaith I am," roared he: "and if she be such a *scamp* as to live without a carriage, I won't be her lacquey for nothing. Two miles are not to be trampled over by me, with no better companion than an old painted woman of quality."

"Surely you cannot mean," returned Pembroke, "that her ladyship was to walk from this place?"

"Without a doubt," cried Shafto, bursting into a horse laugh: "you would be clever to see my lady Stingy in any other carriage than her clogs."

Irritated at the malice of Miss Dundas, and despising the vulgar illiberality of Shafto, Pembroke, without deigning a reply, abruptly left the room; and, hastening out of the house, ran, rather than walked, in hopes of overtaking the countess, before she reached Harrowby.

He crossed the little wooden bridge which lies over the Witham; he scoured the fields; he leaped every stile and gate in his way, gained the enclosure that leads to the top of the hill; where he descried a light moving, and very rightly conjectured that it must be the lantern carried by her ladyship's attendant. Another spring over the shattered fence cleared all obstacles; and he found himself close to lady Tinemouth, who was leaning on the arm of a gentleman. Pembroke stopped at this sight; supposing that she had been met by some person belonging to the town, whose readier gallantry now occupied the place, which Miss Dundas prevented him from filling, he was preparing to retreat, when lady Tinemouth happening to turn her head, imagined from the hesitating embarrassment of his manner, that he was a stranger who had lost his way, and accosted him with that inquiry.

Pembroke bowed in some confusion, and related the simple fact, of his having heard, that she quitted lady Shafto's house without any guard but the servant; and, that he had hurried out, the moment he learned the circumstance, to proffer his services. The countess not only thanked him for such attention, but, constrained by a civility which at that instant she could have wished not to have been necessary, asked him to walk forward with her to the Abbey, and partake of some refreshment.

"But," added she, "though I perfectly recollect having seen another gentleman in lady Shafto's room, besides doctor Denton, I have not the honour of knowing your name."

"It is Somerset," returned Pembroke: "I am the son of that lady Somerset, who during the last year of her life had the happiness of being intimate with your ladyship."

Lady Tinemouth declared her pleasure at this meeting; and turning to the gentleman, who was walking in silence by her side, "Mr. Constantine," said she, "allow me to introduce to you, the cousin of the amiable Miss Beaufort."

Thaddeus, who had too well recognised the voice of his false friend, in the first accents which he addressed to the countess, with a swelling heart bent his head to the cold salutation of Somerset. Hearing that her ladyship's companion was the same Constantine whom he liberated from prison, Pembroke was stimulated with a desire to unmask his double villany to lady Tinemouth; and conceiving a curiosity to see the man, whose person and meretricious qualities blinded even the judgment of his aunt; he readily obeyed the second

invitation of the countess, and consented to go home and sup with her.

Meanwhile, Thaddeus was agitated with a variety of emotions. Every tone of Pembroke's voice reminding him of happier days, pierced his heart, whilst a sense of his ingratitude awakened all the pride and indignation of his soul. Full of resentment, he determined, that whatever might be the result, he would not shrink from an interview, the anticipation of which, Pembroke (who had received from himself an intimation of the name he assumed,) seemed to regard with such indifference.

Lady Tinemouth not imagining that Somerset and the count had any personal knowledge of each other, begged the gentlemen to accompany her into the supper parlour. Pembroke with no inconsiderable degree of rudeness, pushed by Thaddeus, and entered the room before him. The count was so shocked at this instance of ungrateful defiance, and so insulted in every nerve, that he was obliged to pause a moment in the hall, to summon coolness, to follow him with a composed step, and dispassionate countenance. He accomplished this conquest over himself; and taking off his hat, laid it down on the sofa. Lady Tinemouth began to express her joy at his arrival. The eyes of Pembroke fixed on the calm, but severe aspect of the man before him: he stood by the table with such an air of princely greatness, that the candid heart of Pembroke Somerset soon whispered to him, '*Surely, nothing ill can dwell in that breast!*'

Still his eyes followed him, when he turned round, and when he bent his head to answer the countess, in a voice so low, that it escaped his ear. Pembroke was bewildered. There was a something in the features, in the mien of this foreigner,

so like his friend Sobieski ! But then Sobieski was all frankness and animation ; his cheek bloomed with the rich colouring of youth and happiness ; his eyes flashed pleasure, and his lips were decked with smiles. On the contrary, the person before him was not only considerably taller, and of more manly proportions, but his face was pale, reserved, and haughty : besides, he did not appear even to recollect the name of Somerset ; and, what at once destroyed the supposition, his own was Constantine.

These reasonings having quickly passed through the mind of Pembroke, they left his heart unsatisfied. The conflict of his mind flushed his cheek ; his bosom beat ; and, keeping his searching and ardent gaze rivetted on the man, who was either his friend, or his counterpart, lady Tinemouth withdrew from the table, and the eyes of the two young men met. Thaddeus turned paler than before. There is an intelligence in the interchange of looks, which cannot be mistaken ; it is the communication of souls, and there is no deception in their language. Pembroke flew forward, and catching hold of his friend's hand, exclaimed in an impetuous voice, " Am I right ? Are you Sobieski ?"

" I am," returned Thaddeus," almost inarticulate with emotion, and hardly knowing what to understand by Somerset's behaviour.

" Gracious Heaven !" cried he, still grasping his hand, " and can you have forgotten your friend Pembroke Somerset ?"

The ingenuous heart of Thaddeus acknowledged the words and manner of Pembroke, to be the language of truth ; and, trusting that some mistake had involved his former conduct, he at once cast off all suspicion, and throwing his arms around

him, strained him to his breast, and burst into tears.

Lady Tinemouth, who, during this scene, stood mute with surprise, now advanced to the friends, who were weeping on each other's necks, and taking a hand of each, "My dear Sobieski," cried she, "Why did you withhold the knowledge of this friendship from me? Had you told me that you and Mr. Somerset were acquainted, this happy meeting might have been accomplished sooner."

"Yes," replied Pembroke, turning to the countess and wiping away the tears which were trembling on his cheek, "nothing could have given me pain at this moment, but the conviction, that he who was the preserver of my life, and my most generous protector, should, in this country, have endured the most abject distress, rather than let me know that it was in my power to be grateful."

Thaddeus took out his handkerchief, and for a few minutes concealed his face. The countess looked on him with tenderness; and believing that he would sooner regain composure, were he alone with his friend, she stole unobserved out of the room.

Pembroke affectionately resumed; "But, I hope, dear Sobieski, that you will never leave me more. I have an excellent father, who, when he is made acquainted with my obligations to you and your noble family, will glory in loving you as a son." Thaddeus having subdued '*the woman in his heart*' raised his head, with an expression in his eyes far different from that, which chilled the blood of Pembroke, on their first encounter.

"Circumstances," said he, "dear Somerset, have made me greatly injure you. A strange neglect on your side, since we separated at Vil-

lanow, gave the first blow to my confidence in your friendship. Though I lost your direct address, I wrote to you often, and yet you persevered in silence. When I came to England, after having witnessed the destruction of all that was dear to me in Poland, and then of Poland itself, I wished to give your faithfulness another chance; I addressed two letters to you; I even delivered the last at your door myself, and I saw you in the window when I sent it in."

"By all that is sacred," cried Pembroke vehemently, and amazed, "I never saw any letter from you! I wrote you many. I never heard of these you mention. Indeed, I should even now have been ignorant of the palatine's, and your mother's cruel fate, had it not been too circumstantially related in the newspapers."

"I believe you," returned Thaddeus, drawing an agonizing sigh, at the dreadful picture which the last sentence recalled; "I believe you; though at the time of which I speak, I thought otherwise; for, next day, both my letters were re-enclosed in a blank cover, directed as if by your hand, and brought by a servant, with a message, that there was no answer."

"Powers of heaven!" exclaimed Somerset, "there must be some villany in this! Dearest Thaddeus!" cried he, breaking off abruptly, and grasping his hand, "I would have flown to you, had it been to meet death! But why did you not come in yourself? Who prevented you? Then no mistake could have happened. Why did you not come in yourself?"

"Because I was uncertain of your sentiments; my first letter remained unnoticed; and my heart,

dear Somerset," added he, pressing his hand, "would not stoop to solicitation."

"Solicitation?" exclaimed Pembroke with warmth, "you have a right to demand my life! But there is some rascally business in this affair; nothing else could have carried it through; if any of my servants have dared to open these letters—Merciful Heaven," cried he, interrupting himself, "how you must have despised me!"

"I was afflicted," returned Thaddeus, "that the man whom my family so warmly loved could prove so unworthy; and afterwards, whenever I met you in the streets, which I think was once or twice, I confess, to pass you, cut me to the heart."

"And you have met me!" exclaimed Pembroke, "and I not see you? I cannot comprehend it."

"Yes," answered Thaddeus, "and the first time was going into the playhouse. I believe I called after you."

"It is now ten months since," returned Pembroke; "I remember very well, that somebody called out my name, while I was handing lady Coningsby and her sister into the porch. I looked about, and not seeing any one whom I knew, thought I must have been mistaken. But, why, dear Sobieski, why did you not follow me into the theatre?"

Thaddeus shook his head, and smiling languidly; "My poverty would not permit me," replied he, "but I waited in the hall, until every body left the house, in hopes of intercepting you as you passed."

Pembroke sprung from his chair at these words, and, with the most vehement voice and action, exclaimed, "I see it! That rascal Loftus is at the bottom of it! He followed me into the theatre;

he must have seen you, and his cursed selfishness was alarmed. Yes, it must be he! He would not allow me to return that way; when I said I would, he told me a thousand lies about the carriages coming round, and, like a fool, I went out by another door."

"Who is Mr. Loftus?" inquired Thaddeus, surprised at his friend's suspicion; "I do not know the man."

"What," returned Pembroke, walking about the room in a heat, "don't you remember, that Loftus is the name of the scoundrel, who persuaded me to volunteer against Poland? to screen his baseness, I have brought all this upon myself."

"Now I recollect it," replied Thaddeus; "but I never saw him."

"Yet I am not less certain that I am right," replied Somerset: "I will tell you my reasons.—After I quitted Villanow, you remember I met him at Dantzic. Before we left the port, he implored, almost on his knees, that in pity to his mother and sisters, whom he supported out of his salary, I would refrain from incensing my parents against him, by relating any circumstance of our visit to Poland. The man shed tears as he spoke; and, like a fool, I consented to keep the secret, till the vicar of Somerset (a poor soul, ill of the dropsy) dies, and he be in possession of the living. When we landed in England, I found that the cause of my sudden recal was the illness of my dear mother. But Heaven denied me the happiness of beholding her again: she had been buried two days before I reached the shore." Pembroke paused a moment, and then resumed—"For near a month after my return, I could not quit my room; a fever seized me: but, on my recovery, I wrote both to you and

to the palatine. I repeated my letters, at least every six weeks, during the first year of our separation; yet you persisted in being silent. Hurt as I was at this neglect, I believed that gratitude demanded some sacrifices from pride, and I continued to write, even till the spring following. Meanwhile, the papers of the day teemed with Sobieski's actions, Sobieski's fame; and, supposing that increasing glory had blotted me out of your memory, I resolved, thenceforth, to regard our friendship as a dream, and never to speak of it more."

Confounded at this double misapprehension, Thaddeus, with a glowing countenance, expressed his regret for having doubted his friend; and, repeating the assurance of having been punctual to his promise of correspondence, even when he deemed him inconstant, acknowledged, that nothing but a premeditated scheme could have effected so many disappointments.

"Aye;" returned Pembroke, reddening with awakened anger; I could swear that Mr. Loftus has all my letters in his bureau at this moment! No house ever gave a man a better opportunity to play the rogue in than ours. It is a custom with us to lay our letters in a morning on the hall table, whence they are sent to the office; and, in the same way, when the post arrives, they are spread out that their several owners may take them as they pass to breakfast. From this management, I cannot doubt the means by which Mr. Loftus, under the hope of separating us forever, has intercepted every letter to you, and every letter from you. I suppose the wretch feared that I might repent my engagement, if our correspondence were allowed. He trembled, lest the business should be blown before the vicar died, and in con-

sequence lose both the expected living, and his present situation about lord Arun. A villain! for once he has judged rightly; I will unmask him to my father; and shew him what it is to purchase subsistence at the expense of honour and justice."

Thaddeus, who could not withhold immediate credit to these evidences of chicanery, tried to calm the violence of his friend; who only answered, by insisting on having his company back with him to Somerset-Castle.

"I long to present you to my father," cried Pembroke; "when I tell him who you are; of your kindness to me, how rejoiced will he be! How happy, how proud, to have you as his guest; to shew the warm gratitude of a Briton's heart! Indeed, Sobieski, you will love him; for he is generous and noble, like your inestimable grandfather. Besides," added he, smiling with a sudden recollection, "there is my lovely cousin, Miss Beaufort, who, I verily believe, will actually fly into your arms."

The blood rushed over the cheeks of Thaddeus at this speech of his friend, and, half suppressing a sigh, he shook his head.

"Don't look so like an infidel," resumed Somerset. "If you have any doubts of possessing her affections, I can put you out of your pain by a single sentence!—When lady Dundas's household, with myself amongst them, (for little did I suspect, that I was joining the cry against my friend) were asserting the most flagrant instances of your deceit to Euphemia, Mary, alone, withstood the whole tide of malice, and compelled me to release you."

"Gracious Providence!" cried Thaddeus, catching Pembroke's hand, and looking eagerly and with agitation in his face, "Was it you who came to my prison! Was it Miss Beaufort who visited my lodgings?"

"Indeed it was," returned his friend, "and I blush for myself, that I quitted Newgate without an interview. Had I followed the dictates of common decency, I should have seen you; and then, what pain would have been spared my dear cousin! What a joyful surprise would have awaited myself!"

Thaddeus could only reply by pressing his friend's hand. His brain whirled. He could not decide on the nature of his feelings; one moment he would have given worlds to throw himself at Miss Beaufort's feet, and the next, he trembled at the prospect of meeting her so soon.

"Dear Sobieski!" cried Pembroke, "how strangely you receive this intelligence! Is it possible that the love of Mary Beaufort can be rejected?"

"No," cried the count, looking up, his fine face flushed with emotion; "I adore Miss Beaufort. Her virtues possess my whole heart. But can I forget that I have only that heart to offer? Can I forget that I am a beggar? That even now I exist on her bounty?" The eyes of Thaddeus, and the sudden tremour which shook his frame, finished this appeal to his fate.

Pembroke found it enter his soul. To hide its effect, he threw himself on his friend's breast, and exclaimed, "Do not injure me and my father by these sentiments! You are come, dearest Sobieski, to a second home. Sir Robert Somerset will consider himself ennobled in supplying the place of

your lamented grandfather!—and my cousin Mary, as you love her, shall bind us still closer; you must be my relation as well as my friend."

Thaddeus replied with animated acknowledgments of Pembroke's affection: "But," added he, "I must not allow the generous spirit of my dear Somerset to believe, that I can live a dependant on any power, but the Author of my being. I consider nothing so degrading as an existence wasted in idleness; therefore, if Sir Robert Somerset will assist me to procure some honest means of acquiring support, I shall thank him from my soul. In no other way, my kindest friend, can I ever be brought to tax the gratitude of your father."

Pembroke coloured at this, and exclaimed, in a voice of displeasure, "Gracious Heaven, Sobieski, what can you mean? Do you imagine, that ever my father or myself can forget, that you were little less than a prince in your own country? That when in such a high station, you treated me like a brother? That you preserved me, even when I lifted my arm against your life? Can we be such monsters as to forget all this? or think that we acted justly by you, in permitting you to labour for your bread? No, Thaddeus, my very soul spurns the idea. Your mother sheltered me as a son; and I insist, that you allow my father to perform the same part by you! Besides, you shall not be idle; you may have a commission in the army, and I will follow you."

The count pressed the hand of his friend, and looking gratefully in his face, shook his head, and replied, "Had I a hundred tongues, my generous Pembroke, I could not express my sense of your friendship; it is indeed a cordial to my heart; it imparts to me an earnest of happiness, which I

thought had fled forever ; but it shall not allure me from my principles. I am resolved not to live a life of indolence ; and I am resolved, at this period, not to enter the British army. No," added he, emotion elevating his tone and manner, " rather would I toil for subsistence by the sweat of my brow, than be subjected to the necessity of acting in concert with those ravagers who destroyed my country ! I cannot fight by the side of the Russians ! I cannot enlist under their allies ! I will not be led out to devastation ! Mine was, and ever shall be, a defensive sword ;—and, should danger threaten England, I would be as ready to withstand her enemies, as I ardently, though ineffectually, opposed those of unhappy Poland."

Pembroke recognised the high-souled Thaddeus of Warsaw in this lofty burst of enthusiasm, aware that his father's munificence, and manner of conferring esteem and obligations, would go farther towards removing these scruples, than all his arguments, he did not attempt to combat a resolution, which he knew that he could not subdue ; but tried to prevail with him to become his guest, until something could be arranged to suit his wishes.

Thaddeus consented to accompany Somerset to the castle, the day after that on which Sir Robert should be apprised of his coming. Pembroke perceived that the morning had surprised them ; and, shaking his friend warmly by the hand, bade him farewell : then, hastening down the hill, he arrived at the lodge, just as the servants were opening the shutters.

Having given orders to the groom, whom he met in the passage, he wrote a slight apology to Shafto for his abrupt departure ; and mounting his horse, galloped, full of delight, towards Somerset Castle.

CHAP. XIII.

NEXT morning, when the countess and Thaddeus were seated at breakfast, she expressed surprise and pleasure, at the scene which she had witnessed on the preceding night; at the same time intimating some mortification, that he had withheld any part of his confidence from her. Sobieski soon obtained her ladyship's pardon, by relating the manner of his first meeting with Mr. Somerset, and the consequent events of that momentous period.

Lady Tinemouth wept over the distressful fate, that marked the residue of his narrative, with a tenderness which endeared her to his soul. But when, in compliance with his inquiries, she informed him how it happened that she was at Harrowby Abbey, when he supposed her to be on the Wolds, it was his turn to pity, and to shudder at his consanguinity with lord Harwold.

"Indeed," added the countess, "you must have had a most tedious journey from Harwold Park to Harrowby; and nothing but my pleasure could exceed my astonishment, when I met you last night on the hill."

Thaddeus declared, that travelling a few miles farther than he intended was no fatigue to him; yet were it otherwise, the happiness which he then enjoyed, would have acted as a panacea for worse ills, could he have seen her ladyship looking as well as when she left London.

Lady Tinemouth smiled. "You are very right, Sobieski; I am worse than when I was in town. My solitary journey to Harwold harassed me much; and when my son sent me orders to leave it, because his father wanted the place for the autumnal months, I was labouring under a severe cold, which I caught in travelling. Nevertheless I obeyed him, and, in great distress of heart, arrived here last week. How kind you were to follow me! Who informed you of the place of my destination? hardly any of lady Sophia's household?"

"No," returned Thaddeus, "I luckily had the precaution to inquire at the inn where the coach stopped, what part of lord Tinemouth's family were at the Park; and when I heard, that the earl himself was there, my next question was, where then is the countess? The landlord very civilly told me of your having engaged a carriage from his house a day or two before, to carry you to one of his lordship's seats, within a few miles of Somerset Castle. Hence, from what I had heard you say of the situation of Harrowby, I concluded that it must be the abbey; and so I sought you at a venture."

"And I hope that a happy issue," replied she, "will arise from your wanderings! This rencontre, with so old a friend as Mr. Somerset, is a pleasing omen. For my part, I was ignorant of the arrival of the family at the castle until yesterday morning, when I sent off a messenger to apprise my dear Miss Beaufort, that I was in her neighbourhood. To my great dissatisfaction, lady Shafto found me out immediately; and when, in compliance with her teazing invitation, I walked down to sit an hour with her last night, little did I expect that I should meet with the amiable cou-

sin of our sweet friend. So delightful an accident has amply repaid me for the pain that I endured, in seeing Miss Dundas in her ladyship's house: an insolent and reproachful letter, which she wrote to me on your account, has rendered her an object of my most decided dislike."

Thaddeus smiled and bowed. "Since, my dear lady Tinemouth, her groundless malice, and Miss Euphemia's folly, have failed in estranging either your confidence, or the esteem of Miss Beaufort from me, I despise and pardon them both. Perhaps I ought to pity them; for is it not difficult to pass through the enchantments of wealth and adulation, and emerge as pure as when we entered them? Unclouded fortune is, indeed, a trial of spirits; and how brightly does Miss Beaufort rise from the blaze! Surrounded by splendour, homage, and indulgence, she is yet all nature, gentleness, and virtue!"

The countess, who wished to appear cheerful, rallied him on the warmth of his expressions; then rising from her seat, she left him to his meditations, and retired to dress.

The family at Somerset were just drawn round the breakfast table, when Pembroke arrived. During the repast, they expressed their surprise at the suddenness of his return. Miss Beaufort, after repeating the contents of the note, which she had received the preceding day from lady Tinemouth, requested, that her cousin would be kind enough to drive her in his curricle, that morning, to Harrowby.

"I will, with pleasure," answered he, "I have seen her ladyship, and even supped with her last night."

"How came that?" asked Mrs. Dorothy.

"I shall explain it to my father, whenever he will honour me with an audience," returned he, addressing the baronet, with all the joy of his heart looking out at his eyes; "will you indulge me, dear Sir, by half an hour's attention, any time before noon?"

"Certainly," replied Sir Robert; "at present I am going into my study, where I must settle my steward's books; but the moment I have finished, I will send for you."

Mrs. Dorothy walked out after her brother, to attend on her aviary; and Miss Beaufort remaining alone with her cousin, made some inquiries about the countess's reasons for coming to the abbey.

"I know nothing about them," replied he, gaily, "for she went to bed almost the instant I entered the house. Too good to remain where her company was not wanted, she left me to enjoy a most delightful *tete-a-tete* with a dear friend, from whom I parted four years ago. In short, we sat up the whole night together, talking over past scenes,—and present ones too, for I assure you, you were not forgotten."

"I! what had I to do with it?" replied Mary, smiling, "I cannot recollect any friend of yours, whom you have not seen these four years."

"Well, that is strange!" answered Pembroke, "he remembers you perfectly; but, true to your sex, you affirm what you please, though I know that there is not a man in the world whom you prefer before him."

Miss Beaufort shook her head, laughed, and sighed; and, withdrawing her hand from his, threatened to leave him, if he would not be serious.

" I am serious," cried he, pulling her back to her chair : " Would you have me *swear* that I have seen him whom you most wish to see ?"

She regarded the expression of his countenance with a momentary emotion ; and, taking her seat again, " You can have seen no man," said she, " that is of consequence to me ; so, whoever your friend may be, I have only to congratulate you on a meeting, which affords you such delight."

Pembroke burst into a laugh at her composure. " So cold," cried he, " So cautious ! Yet I verily believe that you would participate my pleasure, should I tell you who he is. However you are such a sceptic, that I won't hint even one of the many fine things that he said of you.

She smiled incredulously.

" I could beat you, cousin," exclaimed he, " for this oblique way of saying that I am telling lies ! But I will have my revenge on your curiosity, for on my honour I declare," added he, emphatically, " that last night, I met with a friend at lady Tinemouth's, who, four years ago, saved my life ; who entertained me several weeks in his house ; and who has seen, and adores you ! 'Tis true, on my hopes of heaven ; and I have promised, that you will repay these weighty obligations by marrying him. What do you say to this, my sweet Mary ?"

Miss Beaufort looked anxious at the serious and energetic manner in which he made these assertions : even the sportive kiss that ended the question, did not dispel the gravity, with which she prepared to reply.

Pembroke perceiving her intent, prevented her, by exclaiming, " Cease, Mary, cease ! I see you are going to make a false statement. Let truth prevail, and you will not deny, that I am suing for

a plighted faith? You will not deny who it was that softened and subdued your heart? You cannot conceal from me, that the wanderer Constantine possesses your affections?"

She reddened with pain and displeasure; and, rising from her seat, "I did not expect this cruel, this ungenerous speech from you, Pembroke!" cried she, averting her tearful eyes; "What have I done to deserve so rude, so unfeeling a reproach?"

Pembroke threw his arm round her waist. "Come," said he, in a tender voice, "don't be tragical. I never meant to reproach you, child: I dare say, if you gave your heart, it was only in return for his. I know you are a grateful girl; and, I verily believe, that you won't find much difference between my friend, the young count Sobieski, and the forlorn Constantine."

A suspicion of the truth flashed across Miss Beaufort's mind: unable to speak, she caught hold of her cousin's hands, and looking eagerly in his face, her eyes declared the question that she would have asked.

Pembroke laughed triumphantly; but a servant entering, to tell him that Sir Robert was ready, he strained her to his breast, and exclaimed, "Now I am revenged! Farewell! I leave you to all the pangs of doubt and curiosity!" He then flew out of the room, with an arch glance at her distressed countenance, and hurried up stairs.

She clasped her trembling hands together, as the door closed on Pembroke. "O, gracious Providence!" cried she, "What am I to understand by this mystery, this joy of my cousin's? Can it be possible, that the illustrious Sobieski, and my contemned Constantine are the same persons?" A

burning blush overspread her face and bosom, at the expression *my*, which had escaped her lips.

Whilst the graces, the sweetness, the dignity of Thaddeus, captivated her notice, his sufferings, his virtues, and the mysterious interest which involved his history, fixed her attention, and awakened her esteem. From these grounds the step is short to love. 'When the mind is conquered, the heart surrenders at discretion.' But she knew not, that she had advanced too far to retreat, until the last scene at Dundas-house, by forcing her to defend Constantine against the charge of loving her, made her confess, how much she wished that the charge were true.

Poor and lowly as he seemed, she found that her whole heart and life were wrapped in his remembrance; that his worshipped idea was her most precious solace; her property, the dear treasure which was her secret and supreme felicity. It was the companion of her walks, the monitor of her actions. Whenever she planned, whenever she executed, she asked herself, How would Constantine consider this? and accordingly did she approve or condemn her conduct.

Though separated far from this idol of her memory, thus was the impression which he had stamped on her heart ever present. The shade of Laura visited the solitude of Vaucluse; the image of Constantine haunted the walks of Somerset. The loveliness of nature; its leafy groves, and verdant meadows; its blooming mornings, and luxurious sunsets; the romantic shadows of twilight, or the soft glories of the moon and stars; as they pressed beauty and sentiment upon her heart, awoke it to the remembrance of Constantine: she saw his image, she felt his soul in every object. Subtile

and undefinable is that ethereal chord, which unites our tenderest thoughts with their chain of association!

Before this conversation, in which Pembroke mentioned the name of Constantine, with such badinage and ambiguity, he never heard him spoken of by Mary or his aunt, without declaring a displeasure nearly amounting to anger. Hence, when he now so strangely altered his tone, Miss Beaufort necessarily concluded, that he had seen in the person of him she most valued, some one whom he loved. Before this time, she more than once suspected, from the opinions which Somerset occasionally repeated, respecting the affairs of Poland, that he could only have acquired so accurate a knowledge of its events, by having visited the country itself. She mentioned her suspicion to Mr. Loftus: he denied the fact; and she thought no more on the subject, until the present ambiguous hints of her cousin conjured up these doubts anew; and led her to suppose, that if Pembroke had not disobeyed his father so far as to go to Warsaw, he must have met with the count Sobieski in some other realm. The possibility that this young hero, of whom fame spoke so loudly, might be the mysterious Constantine bewildered and delighted her. The more she compared what she had heard of the one, with what she witnessed in the other, the more was she reconciled to the probability of her ardent hope. Besides, she could not for a moment believe, that her cousin would so cruelly sport with her delicacy and peace, as to excite expectations, which he could not fulfil.

Agitated by a suspense, which bordered on agony, with a beating heart she heard his quick step

descending the stairs. The door opened, and Pembroke, flying into the room, caught up his hat: as he was darting away again, Miss Beaufort, unable to restrain her impatience, with an imploring voice ejaculated his name. He turned round, and displayed to her amazed sight a countenance in which no vestige of his former animation could be traced; his cheek was flushed; and his eyes, full of distraction, shot a wild fire that struck to her heart. Unconscious what she did, she ran up to him; but Pembroke pushing her back, exclaimed, "Don't ask me any questions, if you would not drive me to madness."

"O Heaven!" cried she, catching his arm, and clinging to him while the eagerness of his motion dragged her into the hall; "tell me! Has any thing happened to my guardian? to your friend? to Constantine?"

"No;" replied he, looking at her with a face full of desperation; "but my father commands me to treat him like a villain."

She could hardly credit her senses, at this confirmation, that Constantine and Sobieski were one: turning giddy with the tumultuous delight that rushed over her soul, she staggered back a few paces, and, leaning against the open door, tried to recover breath to regain the room she had left.

Pembroke, having escaped from her grasp, ran furiously down the hill, mounted his horse, and, forbidding any groom to attend him, gallopped towards the high road with the impetuosity of a madman. All the powers of his soul were in arms. Wounded, dishonoured, stigmatized with ingratitude and baseness, he believed himself to be the most degraded of men.

Sir Robert Somerset founded a hatred of the Poles and Hungarians, on the recollection of an injury which he received, in early youth, from some of those people. In this instance, his dislike was implacable ; and when his son set out for the continent, he positively forbade him to enter either Poland or Hungary. Nevertheless, when Pembroke joined the baronet in his library, he did it with confidence. With a bounding heart, and animated countenance, he recapitulated, how he had been wrought upon by the Russian noblemen, to take up arms in their cause, and march into Poland. At these last words, the brow of his father contracted.

Pembroke, who expected some marks of displeasure, hastened to obliterate his disobedience, by narrating the event which introduced not only the young count Sobieski to his succour, but the consequent friendship of the whole of that princely family.

Sir Robert made no reply to this, than by a deeper frown ; and, when Pembroke, with all the ardour of grief, attempted to describe the calamitous death of the palatine, the horrors which attended the last hours of the countess, and the succeeding misery of Thaddeus, who was now in England, no language can paint the rage which at once burst from the baronet. He stamped on the ground, he covered his face with his clenched hands ; then turning on his son with the most tremendous fury, he exclaimed, " Pembroke ! You have outraged my commands ! And never will I pardon you, if this young man ever blast me with his sight."

" Merciful Heaven !" cried Pembroke, thunderstruck at a violence, which he almost wished might

proceed from any cause but intention ; " Surely something has agitated my father ! What has discomposed you, Sir ?"

Sir Robert shook his head, whilst his teeth ground against each other. " Don't mistake me," replied he in a firm voice, " I am perfectly in my senses. It depends on *you* that I shall continue so. You know my oath against those accursed Polanders ; and, I repeat again, if you ever bring that young man into my presence, you shall never see *me* more."

A cold dew overspread the body of Pembroke. He would have caught hold of his father's hand, but he held it back. " O, Sir !" said he, " you surely cannot intend, that I shall treat with ingratitude, the man who saved my life ?"

Sir Robert did not vouchsafe him an answer, but continued walking up and down the room, until his agitation increasing at every step, he opened the door of an interior apartment, and retired, bidding his son remain.

The horror struck Pembroke waited for near a quarter of an hour, before his father re-entered. When he did appear, the deep gloom of his eye gave no encouragement to his son, who, hanging down his head, recoiled from speaking first. Sir Robert approached with a composed but severe countenance, and said, " I have been seeking every palliation that your conduct will admit, but I can find none. Before you quitted England, you knew well my abhorrence of the Polish nation. One of that country, many years ago, wounded my happiness in a way I shall never recover. From that hour I took an oath, never to enter its borders ; and never to suffer one of its people to come within my doors. Rash, disobedient boy ! You

know my disposition, and you have seen the emotion with which this dilemma has shaken my soul! But, be it on your head: you have incurred obligations which I cannot repay. I will not perjure myself, to defray a debt contracted against my positive and declared principles. I never will see this Polander you speak of; and, it is my express command, on pain of my eternal malediction, that you break with him entirely."

Pembroke, with the most agitated feelings, fell into a seat. Sir Robert proceeded.

"I pity your distress, Pembroke, but my resolution cannot be shaken. Oaths are not to be broken with impunity. You must either resign him, or resign me. We may compromise your debt of gratitude; I will give you deeds to put your friend in possession of five hundred pounds a year for life, forever, but, from the hour in which you tell him so, you must see him no more."

Sir Robert was preparing to quit the room; when Pembroke, starting from his chair, threw himself in agony on his knees, and catching by the skirt of his coat, implored him, for God's sake, to recal his words; to remember that he was affixing everlasting dishonour on his son! "Remember, dear Sir!" cried he, holding his struggling hand, "that the man, to whom you offer money as a compensation for insult, is of a nature too noble to receive it. He will reject it, and spurn me; and I shall know that I deserve his scorn. For mercy's sake, spare me the agony of harrowing up the heart of my preserver; of meeting reproach from his eyes!"

"Leave me!" cried the baronet, breaking from him; "I repeat, unless you wish to incur my curse, do as I have commanded."

Thus outraged, thus agonized, Pembroke had appeared before the eyes of his cousin Mary, more like a distracted creature, than a man possessed of his senses. Shortly after his abrupt departure, her apprehension was petrified, to a dreadful certainty of some cruel ruin to her hopes, by an order, which she received in the hand-writing of her uncle, commanding her not to attempt visiting lady Tinemouth, whilst the count Sobieski continued to be her guest.

Hardly knowing whither he went, Pembroke did not arrive at the ruined aisle, which leads to the habitable part of the Abbey until near three o'clock. He inquired of the servant who took his horse, whether the countess and Mr. Constantine were at home. The man replied in the affirmative; but added, with a sad countenance, that he feared neither of them could be seen.

"For what reason?" demanded Somerset.

"Alas! Sir," replied the servant, "this day at noon, while my lady was dressing, she was seized with a violent fit of coughing, which ended in the rupture of a blood vessel. It continued to flow so long, that Mr. Constantine told the apothecary, whom he had summoned, to send for a physician. The doctor is not yet arrived, and Mr. Constantine won't leave my lady."

Though Mr. Somerset was truly concerned at the illness of the countess, the respite it afforded him, from immediately declaring the ungrateful message of Sir Robert, gave him no inconsiderable degree of ease. Some little relieved by the hope of being for one day spared the anguish of displaying his father in a disgraceful light, he entered the Abbey, and commissioned a maid-servant to inform Thaddeus that he was below.

In a few minutes the girl returned with the following lines scrawled on a piece of paper.

"I am grieved that I cannot see my dear Somerset to day; I fear that my revered friend is on her death-bed. I have sent for Dr. Cavendish, who is now at Stamford; doubtless you know he is a man of the first abilities; if human skill could preserve her, I might yet have hopes; but her disorder is a consumption, and its stroke is sure. I am now sitting by her bed-side, and writing what she dictates to her husband, her son, and her daughter: painful, you may believe is the task! I cannot, my dear Somerset, add more, than my hope of seeing you soon; and that you will join in prayers to Heaven for the restoration of my inestimable friend, with your faithful SOBIESKI."

"Alas! unhappy, persecuted Sobieski!" thought Pembroke, as he closed the paper; "To what art thou doomed! Some friends are torn from thee by death; others desert thee in the hour of trouble!"

He took out his pencil, to answer this distressing epistle, but he stopped at the first word; he durst not write, that his father would fulfil any one of those engagements, which he had so largely promised; and, throwing away the pencil and the paper, he left a verbal declaration of his sorrow at what had happened, and an assurance of calling next day. Turning his back on a house, which he had left in the morning, with such animating hopes, he remounted his horse, and, melancholy and slow, rode about the country until evening; so unwilling was he to return to that home, which now threatened him with the frowns of his father, the tears of Mary Beaufort, and the miserable reflections of his own wretched heart.

CHAP. XIV.

Doctor Cavendish not having quitted his friend at Stamford set off for Harrowby the instant Mr. Constantine's messenger arrived ; and before midnight alighted at the Abbey.

When he entered lady Tinemouth's chamber, he found her supported in the arms of Thaddeus, and struggling with a second rupture of her lungs, which seemed to threaten immediate dissolution. As he approached the bed, Thaddeus turned his eyes on him, with an expression, that powerfully told his fears. Dr. Cavendish silently pressed his hand ; then taking from his pocket some styptic drops, which he brought on purpose, he made the countess swallow them, and soon saw that they succeeded in stopping the blood.

Thaddeus and his friend remained by the side of the suffering lady Tinemouth, until ten in the morning, when she sunk into a gentle sleep. Complete stillness being necessary to continue this repose, the doctor proposed leaving a maid to watch by her ladyship ; and drawing the count out of the room, descended the stairs.

Mr. Somerset, who had been arrived half an hour, met them in the breakfast parlour. After a few kind words exchanged between the parties, they sat down with dejected countenances, to their melancholy meal. Thaddeus was too much absorbed in the scene that he had left, to take any thing but a dish of coffee.

" Do you think lady Tinemouth is in imminent danger ?" inquired Pembroke of the doctor.

Dr. Cavendish sighed, and turning to Thaddeus, directed to him the answer which his friend's question demanded. "I am afraid, my dear Mr. Constantine," said he, in a reluctant voice, "that you are to sustain a new trial! I fear her ladyship cannot live eight-and-forty hours."

Thaddeus threw down his eyes, and shuddered, but made no reply. Further remarks were prevented by a messenger from the countess, who desired Mr. Constantine's immediate attendance at her bed-side. He obeyed. In half an hour he returned, with the tears yet wet on his cheek.

"Dear Thaddeus!" cried Pembroke, rising and taking his hand, "I trust that the countess is not worse? This emotion of yours is too distressing: it afflicts my very heart." Indeed it rent it; for Pembroke could not help internally acknowledging, that when Sobieski should close the eyes of lady Tinemouth, he would be paying the last sad office to his last friend. That dear distinction, he durst no longer arrogate to himself. Denied the fulfilment of its duties, he thought, that to retain the title would be an assumption without a right.

Thaddeus drew his hand over his again overflowing eyes; "The countess herself," said he, "feels the truth of what Dr. Cavendish told us. She sent for me, to beg, that, as I loved her, or would wish to see her die in peace, to devise some means of bringing her daughter to the Abbey to night. As for lord Harwold, she says, his behaviour, since he arrived at manhood, has been of a nature so cruel and unnatural, that she would not draw on herself the misery, or he the added guilt, of a refusal: But with regard to lady Albina, who has been quiescent in all their barbarities, she trusts, that she might be prevailed on to seek a

last embrace from a dying parent. It is this request," continued he, "that agitates me. When she pictured to me, with all the fervour of a mother, her doating fondness for this daughter, (on whom, whenever she did venture to hope, all her fairy dreams rested;) when she wrung my hands, and beseeched me, as if I had been the sole disposer of her fate, to let her see her child before she died; I could only promise every exertion to effect it; and, with an aching heart, I came to consult you."

Dr. Cavendish was opening his lips to speak, but Somerset in his eagerness to relieve his friend did not perceive it, and immediately answered: "I will undertake this very hour, what you have promised. I know that lord Tinemouth's family are now at the Wold. It is only thirty miles distant, I will send a servant, to have relays of horses ready. My curricle, which is at the door, will be more convenient than a chaise; and I will engage to be back before to-morrow morning. Write a letter, Thaddeus," added he, "to lady Albina; tell her of her mother's situation; and, though I never have seen her ladyship, I will give it into her own hand; and carry her off directly, even were it in the face of her villanous father."

The pale cheeks of Sobieski were flushed with a momentary hectic; turning to Dr. Cavendish, he begged him to write, whilst he walked out with his friend to order the carriage. Pembroke was thanked for his zeal, but it was not by words; they are too weak vehicles to convey strong impressions; Thaddeus pressed his hand, and accompanied the action with a look, which spoke volumes. The withered heart of Pembroke expanded under the animating gratitude of his friend: he sprung into his seat, and forgot, until he lost

sight of Harrowby Hill, how soon he must appear to that friend, as the most ungrateful of men.

It was near four in the afternoon, before Mr. Somerset left his curricle, at the little inn, which skirts the village of Harthorpe. The Paling belonging to lord Tinemouth's park was only a few yards distant; but, fearful of being observed, Pembroke sought a more obscure part; and, scaling a wall, which was covered by the branches of high trees, he found his way to the house, through an almost impassable thicket.

He watched two hours, for the appearance of lady Albina, (whose youth and elegance, he thought, would unequivocally distinguish her from the rest of the earl's household,) but in vain. Desponding of success, he was preparing to change his station, when he heard a sound among the dry leaves, and the next moment, a beautiful young creature passed the bush, behind which he was concealed. The fine symmetry of her profile assured him that she must be the daughter of lady Tinemouth. She stopped to gather a chinaster: Pembroke, knowing that no time should be lost, gently emerged from his recess; but not in so quiet a manner as to escape the ear of lady Albina, who instantly looking round, screamed, and would have fled, had he not thrown himself before her, and exclaimed, "Stay, lady Albina! For Heaven's sake, stay! I come from your mother!"

Her ladyship gazed fearfully in his face, and tried to release her hand, which he had seized to prevent her flight.

"Do not be alarmed," continued he; "no harm is intended you. I am the son of Sir Robert Somerset; and the friend of your mother, who is now on the point of death. She implores to see you

this night, (for she has hardly an hour to live) to hear from your own lips, that you do not hate her."

Lady Albina, now wholly given up to his relation, trembled dreadfully ; and, with faded cheeks, and quivering lips, replied, " Hate my mother ! O, no ! I have ever dearly loved her !"

A flood of tears prevented her speaking further ; and Pembroke perceiving that he had gained her confidence, put the doctor's letter into her hand. The gentle heart of lady Albina bled at every word, which her almost blinded eyes read over ; turning to Pembroke, who stood contemplating her lovely countenance with the deepest interest, she said, " Pray, Mr. Somerset, take me now to my mother. Were she to die before I arrive, I should be miserable for life. Alas ! alas ! I have never been allowed to behold her ! Never been allowed to visit London, because my father knew that I believed my poor mother innocent, and would have seen her had it been possible."

Lady Albina wept violently as she spoke, and giving her hand to Pembroke, timidly looked round, towards the house, and added, " You must take me this instant. We must hasten away, in case we should be surprised. If lady Sophia were to know that I have been speaking with any body out of the family, I should be locked up for months."

Pembroke did not require a second command, from his beautiful charge ; but conducting her through the unfrequented paths by which he had entered, seated her in his curricle ; and whipping his horses, set off, full gallop, towards the melancholy goal of his enterprize.

The tender lady Albina, (whose ingenuous mind had ever been proof against the malicious insinua-

tions of lady Sophia to the prejudice of lady Tinemouth,) sat by the side of Mr. Somerset, sometimes mute with sorrow; sometimes lamenting, with all the artless eloquence of nature, the injuries of her dying parent, and her own unhappiness, in having been so long withheld from paying duty, where she owed so much affection.

Whilst these two anxious travellers were pursuing their sad journey, the inhabitants of the Abbey were distracted with apprehension, that the countess would expire before their arrival. Ever since lady Tinemouth received information that Mr. Somerset was gone to the Wold, hope and fear agitated her almost to suffocation; at length, wearied out with solicitude and expectation, she turned her dim eyes upon Thaddeus, and said, in a languid voice, "My dear friend, it must be near midnight. I shall never see the morning; I shall never in this world see my child. I pray you, thank Mr. Somerset for all the trouble I have occasioned; and my daughter, my Albina!" added her ladyship, hardly able to articulate. "Oh! Father of mercies!" cried she, holding up her clasped hands, "pour all thy blessings upon her head! she never wilfully gave this broken heart a pang!"

The countess had hardly ended speaking, when Thaddeus heard a bustle on the stairs; suspecting that it might be the arrival of his friend, he made a sign to Dr. Cavendish to go and inquire. His heart beat violently, whilst he kept his eye fixed on the door, and held the fainting pulse of lady Tinemouth in his hand. The doctor re-entered, and, in a low voice, whispered, "lady Albina is here."

The words acted like magic on the fading senses of the countess; with preternatural strength she

started from her pillow, and catching hold of Sobieski's arm with both hers, cried, "O give her to me whilst I have life."

Lady Albina appeared, led in by Pembroke, but instantly quitting his hand, with an agonizing shriek she rushed towards the bed, and flung herself into the extended arms of her mother. Those arms closed on her, and the head of the countess rested on her bosom.

Dr. Cavendish perceived, by the struggles of the young lady, that she was in convulsions, and taking her off the bed, he consigned her to Pembroke and Thaddeus, who carried her into another apartment: he remained to assist the countess.

Albina was removed; but the eyes of her amiable and injured mother were never again unclosed: she had breathed her last sigh, in grateful ecstasy, on the bosom of her daughter; and Heaven had taken her spotless soul to itself.

Being convinced that the countess was indeed no more, the good doctor left her remains in charge with the women; and repairing to the adjoining room found lady Albina yet senseless in the arms of his two friends. She was laid on a sofa, and Cavendish was pouring some drops into her mouth, when he descried Thaddeus gliding softly out of the room: desirous to spare him the shock of suddenly seeing the corpse of one whom he loved so dearly, he said, "Stop, Mr. Constantine! I conjure you, do not go into the countess's room!"

The eyes of Thaddeus turned with quickness on the distressed face of the physician; one glance explained what the doctor durst not speak; and hastily saying, "I shall obey you," he hurried from the chamber.

In the count's rapid descent from lady Albina's room to the breakfast parlour, he too plainly perceived, by the tears of the servants, that he had now another sorrow to add to his accumulated load. He darted from the clamorous laments of these honest people, into the parlour, and shutting the door, threw himself on a sofa; but rest induced thought, and thought harrowed up his soul. He started from his position; he paced the room in a paroxysm of anguish; he would have given worlds for one tear to relieve his oppressed heart. Ready to suffocate, he threw open a window and leaned out. Not a star was visible to light the darkness; the wind blew freshly; and, with parched lips, he inhaled it, as the reviving breath of heaven.

He was sitting on the window-seat, with his head leaning against the casement, when Pembroke entered unobserved: walking up to him, he laid his hand upon his arm, and ejaculated in a tremulous voice, "Thaddeus, dear Thaddeus!"

Thaddeus rose at the well known sounds; they reminded him, that he was not yet alone in the world; and throwing himself upon the bosom of Mr. Somerset, he exclaimed, "Heaven has still reserved thee, my dear Pembroke, to be my comforter! In thy friendship," added he, wiping away the tears which relieved his bursting heart, "I shall find an affection similar with those which are gone forever: my friend, my brother! you are the last cord that binds me to the world."

Pembroke received the embrace of his friend; he felt his tears upon his cheek; but he could neither return the one, nor sympathise with the other. The conviction, that he was soon to sever that cord, which bound them to each other; that he was to cut asunder that knot, which ought to have united

them forever; that he was to deprive the man who had preserved his life, of the only stay of his existence, and abandon him at once to despair! all these ideas struck to his soul; and, grasping the hand of his friend, he gazed at his averted and dejected features, with a look of desperate horror. "Sobieski," cried he, "whatever may happen, never forget, that I swear, that I love you dearer than my life! And when I am forced to abandon my friend, I shall not be long abandoning what will then be worthless to me."

Not perceiving the frenzy of his eye which accompanied this energetic declaration, Thaddeus gave no other meaning to the words, than the belief, that it was the most expressive assurance of affection, which the forceful nature of his friend could devise.

The entrance of Dr. Cavendish disturbed the two young men; to whom he communicated with concern, the increased indisposition of lady Albina.

"The shock," said he, "which she received from the meeting, and death of her mother, has so materially shaken her delicate frame, that I have ordered her to bed, and administered an opiate, which I hope will procure her some repose:—and you, my dear Sir," added he, addressing the count, "you had better seek a little rest! The stoutest constitution might sink under what you have lately endured. Pray allow Mr. Somerset and myself to prevail with you, on our accounts, if not on your own, to retire for half an hour!"

Thaddeus, in disregard of his personal comfort, never infringed on that of others; he felt that he could not sleep, but he knew it would gratify his benevolent friends to suppose that he did; and, accordingly, without opposition, he went to a room,

and throwing himself on a bed, lay for near an hour, ruminating on all that had passed.

There is an omnipresence in thought, or a celerity producing nearly the same effect, which brings within the short space of a few minutes, the images of many foregoing years. In almost the same moment, Thaddeus reflected on his strange meeting with the countess; her melancholy story; her forlorn death-bed; the fatal secret, that her vile husband and son were his father and brother; and that her daughter whom his warm heart acknowledged as a sister, was with him under the same roof, and like him, the innocent inheritor of her father's shame.

Whilst these multifarious and painful meditations were agitating his perturbed mind, Dr. Cavendish found repose on a couch; and Pembroke Somerset, every instant conceiving greater abhorrence to his ungrateful task, resolved once more to try the influence of entreaty, on the hitherto generous spirit of his father. With mingled hope and despondence, he commenced this last attempt, to shake, if possible, so fatal a resolution:

"*To Sir Robert Somerset, Bart. Somerset-Castle.*

"I have not ventured into the presence of my dear father, since he uttered those dreadful words, which I could give up my existence to believe, I had never heard. You denounced a curse upon me, if I opposed your will, to have me break all connexion with the man who preserved my life. When I think on this; when I remember, that it was from *you* I received a command so inexplicable in yourself, so disgraceful to me, I am almost mad: and what I shall be, should you, by

repeating your injunctions, force me to obey them. Heaven only knows ; but I am certain that I cannot survive the loss of my honour ; I cannot survive the sacrifice of all my principles of virtue ; which such conduct must forever destroy.

" O, my father ! I conjure you ! reflect, before, in compliance with an oath, which it was almost guilt to make, you decree your only son to everlasting shame and remorse ! Act how I will I shall never be happy more. I cannot live under your malediction ; and should I give up my friend, my conscience will reproach me every instant of my existence. Can I draw the breath which he prolonged, and cease to remember, that I have abandoned him to want and misery ? It were vain to flatter myself that he will condescend to escape either, by the munificence which you offer as a compensation for my friendship. No ; I cannot believe that his sensible and independent nature is so changed ; circumstances never had any power over the nobility of his soul.

" Misfortune, which threw the count Sobieski, friendless, on the bounty of England, cannot make him appear otherwise in my eyes, than as the idol of Warsaw, whose smile was honour, and whose friendship conferred distinction.

" Though deprived of the splendour of command ; though the eager circle of friends no longer cluster round him ; though a stranger in this country, and without a home ; though in place of an equipage and retinue, he is followed by calamity and neglect ; yet, in my mind, I still see him in a car of triumph : I see, not only the opposer of his nation's enemies, but the vanquisher of his own desires ; I see the heir of a princely house, who, when mankind have deserted him, is yet en-

compassed by his virtues ; I see him, though cast out from a hardened and unjust society, still surrounded by the lingering spirits of those, who were called to better worlds !

" And this is the man, my dear father, (whom I am sure, had he been of any other country than Poland, you would have selected from all other men, to be the friend and example of your son ;) this is he whom you command me to thrust away !

" I beseech you to examine this injunction ! I am now writing under the same roof with him : it depends on you, my ever revered father, whether I am doing so for the last time ; whether this is the last day, in which your son is to consider himself a man of honour ; whether he is henceforth to be a wretch, overwhelmed with shame and sorrow !

" I have not yet dared to utter one word, of what your cruel orders dictate, to my unhappy friend ; he is now retired to seek some rest, after the anguish of having witnessed the death of lady Tinemouth, who died this night, in consequence of an illness, which lasted only eight-and-forty hours.—Should I have to tell him that he is to lose me too, —but I cannot add more. Your own heart, my dear father, must tell you, that my soul is on the rack, until I have an answer to this letter.

" Before I shut my paper, let me implore you on my knees ; whatever you may decide, do not hate me ; do not load my breaking heart with a parent's curse ! Whatever I may be, however low and degraded in my own eyes, still, that I have sacrificed what is most precious to me, to my father, will impart the only consolation which will then have power to reach your dutiful son,

P. Somerset.

" *Harrowby-Abbey, 5 o'clock in the morning.*"

Dr. Cavendish remained in a profound sleep, whilst Pembroke, with an aching heart, having written the above letter, and dispatched it with a man and horse, tried to compose himself, to half an hour's forgetfulness of life and its turmoils ; but he found his attempts as ineffectual as those of his friend.

Thaddeus tossed and tumbled on his restless pillow. Reluctant to disturb the doctor and Somerset, who he hoped, having less cause for regret, had found that repose he sought for in vain, he remained in bed. He longed for morning. Any change of situation seemed to his irritated nerves better than the state in which he was ; and with some gleams of pleasure, he watched the dawn, and the rising of the sun, behind the opposite hill. He got up, opened the window, and looking out, saw a man throw himself off a horse, which was all in a foam, and enter the house.

Surprised at this circumstance, he descended to the parlour, where he found the man ; who, being Pembroke's messenger, had returned express from the castle, bearing an order from Sir Robert, (who was taken alarmingly ill,) that his son should come back immediately.

Dismayed with this new distress, Mr. Somerset pressed the count so closely to his breast, when he bade him farewell, that a more suspicious person might have apprehended that it was to be a final parting : but Thaddeus discerned nothing more in the anguish of his friend's countenance, than fear for the safety of Sir Robert ; and fervently wishing his recovery, he bade Pembroke remember, that should more assistance be necessary, Dr. Cavendish would remain at the Abbey until lady Albina's return to the Wold.

Mr. Somerset being gone ; towards noon, when the count was anxiously waiting the appearance of the physician from the room of his sister, he was surprised at the abrupt entrance of two gentlemen. He rose, and bowing, inquired what was their business ? The elder of the men, with a fierce countenance, and a voice of thunder, announced himself to be the earl of Tinemouth, and the other, his son.

" We are come," continued he, standing at a haughty distance, " we are come to carry from this nest of infamy, lady Albina Stanhope, whom some one of her mother's paramours,—perhaps you, Sir ; dared to steal from her father's house, yesterday evening. And I am here to give you that chastisement, which your audacity deserves."

With difficulty the count Sobieski suppressed the passions which were rising in his breast. He turned a scornful glance on the person of lord Harwold, (who, with an air of insufferable derision, was coolly measuring his figure through an eye-glass ;) and then replying to the earl, said in a firm voice, " My lord, whoever you suppose me to be, it matters not ; I now stand in the place of lady Tinemouth's executor ; and, to my last gasp, I will prove myself the defender of her injured name."

" Her lover !" interrupted lord Harwold, turning on his heel.

" Her defender, Sir !" repeated Thaddeus, with a tremendous frown ; " and shame and sorrow will pursue that son, who requires a stranger to supply his duty."

" Wretch !" cried the earl, forgetting his assumed loftiness, and advancing passionately towards Thaddeus, with his stick held up, " How dare you address such language to an English nobleman ?"

"By the right of nature, which holds her laws over all mankind," returned he, calmly looking on the raised stick. "When an English nobleman forgets that he is a son, he deserves reproach from his meanest vassal."

"You see, my lord," cried Harwold, sliding behind his father, "what we bring on ourselves by harbouring these democratic foreigners! Sir," added he, addressing himself to Thaddeus, "your dangerous principles shall be communicated to the alien-office! Such fellows ought to be hanged."

Sobieski eyed the enraged little lord, with contempt; and turning to the earl, who was again going to speak, he said in an unaltered tone, "I cannot guess, lord Tinemouth, what is the reason of this attack on me. I came hither by accident; I found the countess ill; and, from respect to her excellent qualities, I remained with her, until her eyes were closed forever. She desired to see her daughter before she died. What human heart could deny a mother such a request? and my friend Pembroke Somerset undertook to bring lady Albina to the Abbey."

"Pembroke Somerset!" echoed the earl, "A pretty guard for my daughter truly! I have no doubt that he is just such a rascal as his father; just such a person as yourself! I am not to be imposed on by your falsehoods: I know lady Tinemouth to have been a disgrace to me; and you, to be that German adventurer, on whose account I sent her from London."

Surprised at this unexpected calumny on the memory of a woman, whose fame, from any other mouth, came as unsullied as purity itself, Thaddeus gazed with horror at the furious countenance of the man whom he believed to be his father. His

heart swelled ; but not deigning to reply to a charge, as unmanly as it was false, he calmly took out of his pocket the two letters, which the countess had dictated to her husband and her son.

Lord Harwold tore his open, cast his eyes over the first words, then crumpling it in his hand, threw it from him, exclaiming, " I am not to be frightened, either by her arts, or the lies of her fellows."

Thaddeus, no longer master of himself, sprung towards this unnatural son, and seizing his arm with the strength of a Hercules, " lord Harwold !" cried he, in a dreadful voice, " were it not that I have some mercy on you, for that parent's sake, to whom, like a parricide, you are giving a second death, by such murderous slander, I would resent her wrongs at the hazard of your worthless life !"

" My lord ! my lord !" cried the trembling Harwold, quaking under the gripe of Thaddeus, and shrinking from the terrible brightness of his eyes ; " my lord ! my lord, save me !"

The earl, almost suffocated with rage, called out, " Ruffian ! let go my son !" and again raising his arm, aimed a blow at the head of Thaddeus, who wrenching the stick out of the foaming lord's hand, snapped it in two, and threw the pieces out of the window.

Lord Harwold took this opportunity to ring the bell violently ; on which summons, his own two servants entered the room.

" Now, you low-born, insolent scoundrel !" cried the disarmed earl, stamping with his feet, and pointing to the men who stood at the door ; " You shall be turned by the neck and heels, out of this house. Richard, James, collar the fellow instantly."

Thaddeus only extended his arm to the men, (who were looking confusedly on each other,) and calmly said, "If either of you attempt to obey this command of your lord, you shall have cause to repent it."

The men retreated. The earl repeated his orders.

"Rascals! Do as I command you, or instantly prepare to quit my service. I will teach you," added he, clenching his fist at the count, who stood resolutely and serenely before him, "I will teach you how to behave to a man of high birth."

The footmen were again deterred from approaching, by a glance from the intimidating eyes of Thaddeus; who, turning with stern dignity to the storming earl, "You can teach me nothing about high birth," said he, "that I do not already know. Could it be of any independent benefit to a man, then had I not received the taunts and insults which you have dared to cast upon me."

At that moment, Dr. Cavendish having heard a bustle made his appearance. Amazed at the sight of two strangers, who from their enraged countenances, and the proud elevation with which Thaddeus was standing between them, he rightly judged to be the earl and his son, he advanced towards his friend, intending to support him in the attack, which he saw was menaced, by the violent gestures of his visitors.

"Dr. Cavendish," said Thaddeus, speaking to him as he approached; "your name must be a passport to the confidence of any man; I therefore shall gratify the husband of my ever-lamented friend, by quitting this house; but I delegate to you the office with which she entrusted me. I leave you in charge of her sacred remains; and of

the jewels, which you will find in her apartment. She desired that half of them might be given, with her blessing, to her daughter, and the other half, with her pardon, to her son.

"Tell me, Dr. Cavendish," cried the earl, as Thaddeus was passing him to leave the room; "Who is that insolent fellow? By Heaven, he shall smart for this!"

"Aye, that he shall," added lord Harwold, "if I have any interest with government."

Dr. Cavendish was preparing to speak, when Thaddeus, turning round at this last threat of the viscount's, said, "If I did not know myself to be as high above lord Harwold, as heaven is above the earth, perhaps he might provoke me to treat him as he merits; but I spurn such resentment, as I despise him. For you, my lord," added he, addressing the earl, with an agitated countenance and voice, "there is an angel in heaven, who pleads against the insults you have obstinately heaped upon an innocent man."

Thaddeus disappeared as he uttered the last word; and, hastening from the house and park, stopped at a farmer's cottage, near the brow of the hill. The owners of this humble little place, being the parents of one of lady Tinemouth's maids, gladly welcomed the so highly-praised Mr. Constantine; and offered him the command of their house, until he might find it convenient to quit the neighbourhood.

Any prospect of repose promised elysium to him. With harassed and torn nerves, he took possession of an apartment, which looked down upon the road that led from the Abbey to the town. The rapidity of the late events bewildered his senses like the illusions of a dream. He had

seen his father, his brother, his sister; and, most probably, he had parted from them forever; at least, he hoped, that he should never again be tortured with the sight of lord Tinemouth or his son.

"How!" thought he, whilst he walked up and down his solitary apartment, "how could the noble nature of my mother love such a man? And how could he have held so long an empire over the pure heart of the countess?"

Over and over again, he asked himself the question, but could return no answer: He could no where discern in the bloated visage, and passionate gestures of the earl, any of that beauty of countenance, or grace of manners, which had alike charmed Therese Sobieski, and the tender Adeliza. Like those hideous chasms, which are dug deep in the land by the impetuous sweep of a torrent, the course of violent passions, leaves vast and irreparable traces in the soul, and on the features. So it was with lord Tinemouth.

"Gracious Providence!" ejaculated Thaddeus; "How legibly does vice or virtue write itself on the countenance! The earl's figure and face may have been fine, but the lineaments of profligacy have now degraded every part of him. Good God! Can he be my father! Can it be his blood that is now running in my veins? Can it be his blood, that rises at this moment, with detestation against him?"

Before the sun set, Thaddeus was aroused from these painful soliloquies, by still more painful emotions: He saw from his window, a hearse driving at full gallop up the road, which ascended to the Abbey, and presently return with a more sol-

emn pace, followed by a post-chaise, and the earl's coach.

"Inhuman wretches!" cried Thaddeus, leaning out of the window; and pursuing with his eye, the tips of the sable plumes, as the cavalcade wound round the road; "Could you not allow this poor corse a little rest? Must her injuries be extended to the grave? Must her cold relics be insulted, be hurried to the tomb, without reverence, without decency?"

The noble heart of Thaddeus was convulsed with horror, at this climax of the earl's barbarity. Dr. Cavendish entered: he spoke of the perpetrators of an act, which he deemed sacrilege against the dead; but Thaddeus could not bear it; and he interrupted him by inquiring, how lady Albina had borne the removal of her mother's remains.

"Very ill," returned the doctor; "and though I warned the earl, that to compel her ladyship to follow the hearse would be at the peril of her life, yet he would not be softened. He put her into the coach in a state of insensibility, with no other assistant than a woman servant; and then, loaded with the secret curses of every honest heart, I saw him set off in a post-chaise, which was already occupied by his detestable son. Heaven's malediction must follow them!"

The doctor pursued the subject. Sobieski's wearied spirits listened to him with patience; for nothing could now be said to increase an abhorrence, which had gained its height. He acknowledged to himself, that he hated the earl; and he heard, in gloomy silence, the new crimes recounted by his friend.

In the midst of this depressing conversation, a courier arrived from Dr. Cavendish's Stamford patient, desiring that he would return immediately. The gentleman having suffered a relapse, Cavendish, with some reluctance to quit the count, (whom he still knew by no other name than Constantine,) ordered the chaise to the door. He shook hands with Thaddeus, requested he would let him hear from him, and bidding him many affectionate adieus, looked out of the carriage window, until the faint light of the moon, and the fading glimmer of the cottage candles, failed to make the little spot, which contained his friend, even discernible.

CHAP. XV.

For the first time during many nights, Thaddeus slept soundly ; but his dreams were disturbed ; and he awoke from them at an early hour, unrefreshed, and in much fever.

The simple breakfast which his cottage host and hostess set before him was hardly touched. Their nicely drest dinner met with the same fate. He was ill, and possessed neither appetite nor spirits to eat. The good people being too civil to intrude upon him, he sat alone in his window from eight o'clock, (at which hour he had arisen,) until the cawing of the rooks, as they returned to the Abbey woods, reminded him of the approach of evening. He was uneasy at the absence of Somerset ; not so much on his own account as on that of Sir Robert, whose increased danger might have occasioned this delay : However, he hoped otherwise. Longing earnestly for a temporary asylum under the roof of his friend, he trusted, that the sympathy of Pembroke would heal all his wounds, and fit him, (if it were required,) yet farther to brave the buffets of adverse fortune. Nor was Miss Beaufort forgotten. If ever one idea more than another sweetened the bitterness of his reflections, it was the remembrance of the lovely Mary. Whenever her image rose before him ; whether he were standing with folded arms, and looking with vacant gaze on the valley beneath ; or when cast upon his watchful pillow, he opened his aching eyes to the morning light ; still, as her beautiful figure

presented itself to his mind, he sighed ; but it was a sigh laden with balm ; it did not tear his breast like those which were wrung from him by the hard hand of calamity and insult ; it was the soft breath of love, which makes man dream of heaven, whilst it betrays him to the grave. Thaddeus thought it delightful to recollect how she had looked on him ; it was happiness, to know that he owed his liberty to her ; and the anticipation, that he should again dwell in her smiles, again draw bliss from her eyes, swelled, agitated, and intoxicated his soul.

" Sweet Mary !" murmured he, " I shall see thee once more ! I shall again experience thy kindness ! I will thank thee with my heart ; and think myself blest, in being allowed the privilege of loving thee in silence, and forever."

The sight of Pembroke riding through the farmer's fields towards the cottage agreeably recalled the wandering mind of Sobieski. He went out to meet him ; Mr. Somerset, putting his horse on a gallop, was at his friend's side, and had alighted, before he could cross the first meadow. Thaddeus inquired after the baronet's health. Pembroke answered the question, with an incoherency devoid of all meaning. Thaddeus looked at him with surprise. They walked towards the house, but he did not seem to recover himself ; his absence of mind, and the wild rambling of his eyes, whenever he was spoken to, were so striking, that the count entertained no doubt of some dreadful accident.

As soon as they entered the little parlour, Pembroke threw himself into a chair, and, throwing off his hat, wiped the perspiration from his face, which, though a cold October evening, was streaming down his forehead. Thaddeus endured a suspense almost too painful to be borne.

"What is the matter, dear Pembroke? Is Miss Beaufort well?"

"Perfectly:" returned he, "Every body is well, excepting myself and my father, who, I verily believe, has lost his senses; at any rate he will drive me mad."

The manner in which this reply was uttered astonished Thaddeus so much, that he could only gaze with wonder, on the convulsed features of his friend. Pembroke observed his amazement, and laying his hand on his arm, "My dear, dear Sobieski!" said he, "What do I not owe to you? Good Heaven! how humbled am I in your sight! But there is a Power above, who knows how intimately you are woven with every artery of this heart."

"I believe it, my kind Pembroke;" cried Thaddeus, yet more alarmed than before; "Tell me what it is that distresses you. If my counsel, or my sympathy, can offer any thing to comfort or assist you, you know I am your own."

Pembroke burst into tears, and covering his streaming eyes with his handkerchief, exclaimed, "I am indeed distressed! Distressed even beyond your comfort. O! How can I speak it! You will despise my father, Thaddeus! you will spurn me."

"Impossible!" cried he, with energy; though his flushed cheek and fainting heart immediately declared that he had anticipated what he must hear.

"I see," cried Pembroke, regarding the altered features of his friend with a glance of agony; "I see, that you think it is possible, that my father can sink me below my own contempt."

The benumbing touch of ingratitude ran through the veins of Thaddeus; his frame was chilled, was

petrified ; but his just affection and calmed countenance proclaimed how true a judgment he passed on the whole. He took the burning hand of Mr. Somerset in his own hand, and, with a steady and consoling voice, said, " Assure yourself, dear Pembroke, whatever be the commands of your father, I shall adhere to them. I can understand by these generous emotions, that he objects to receive me as your friend. Perhaps," added he, a flash of suspicion gleaming through his mind ; " perhaps Miss Beaufort may have perceived the devotedness of my heart, and disdaining my——."

" Hush, for Heaven's sake !" cried Pembroke, starting from his chair ; " Do not implicate my poor cousin ! Do not add to her disappointment, the misery that you suspect her ! No Thaddeus," continued he in a calmer tone, " Mary Beaufort loves you : she confessed it in an agony of grief on my bosom, just before I came away ; and only through her, I dare ever expect to meet forgiveness from *you*. In spite of my father, you may marry her. She has no curse to dread ; she need not sacrifice all that is most precious in her sight, to the obstinate caprice of criminal resentment."

" A curse !" reiterated Thaddeus. " How is this ! What have I done to deserve such hatred from your father ?"

" O ! nothing ;" cried Pembroke, " nothing. My father never saw you. My father thanks you for all that you have done for me ; but it is your country that he hates. Some Polander, years back, injured him ; and my father took a fatal oath against the whole nation. He declares, that he cannot, he will not break it, were he, by so doing, to save his own life, or even mine ;

for, (Heaven forgive me!) I was this morning wrought up to such a pitch of frenzy, that I threatened to destroy myself, rather than sacrifice my gratitude and honour to his cruel commands! Nay, to convince you that his is no personal enmity to yourself, he ordered me to give you writings which will put you in possession of five hundred a year forever. I have them with me."

All the pride of his princely house rose at once in the breast of Thaddeus. Though full of indignation at this insult of Sir Robert's, he regarded the averted face of his friend with compassion, whilst in a firm voice, he rejected the degrading compromise.

"Tell your father," added he, addressing Pembroke in a tone, which even his affection could not soften from a command; "that my absence is not to be bought with money, nor my friendship so rewarded."

Pembroke covered his burning face with his hands. This sight, at once brought down the haughty spirit of the count, who continued in gentler accents; "Whatever be the sentiments of Sir Robert Somerset, they shall meet with due attention from me. He is your father, therefore I respect him; but he has put it out of his power to oblige me: I cannot accept his bounty. Though your heart, my dearest Pembroke, is above all price, yet I will make it a sacrifice to your duty."—And by so doing, put the last seal on my misfortunes! was the meaning of the heavy sigh which accompanied his last words.

Pembroke traversed the room in an agony. "Merciful Providence!" cried he, wringing his clasped hands; "direct me! O, Thaddeus, if you could read my tortured heart, you would pity me;

you would see that this affair is tearing my soul from my body. What am I to do? I cannot, I will not, part with you forever."

The count went up to him, and drew him to a seat: "Be satisfied," said he, "that I am convinced of your affection. Whatever may happen, this assurance will be sufficient to give *me* comfort; therefore, I entreat you, dear Pembroke, by that affection, not to bring regret to me, and reproach on yourself, by disobeying the will of your father! If we separate for life, remember, my beloved friend, that the span of our existence here is short; we shall meet again in a happier world; perhaps more blest, for having immolated our wishes to hard duty in this."

"Cease, Sobieski, cease!" cried Pembroke, "I can draw no consolation from this reasoning. It is not duty to obey a hatred little short of distraction; and, if we now separate, I feel, that I shall never know peace again. Good Heaven! what comfort can I find, when you are exposed to all the indignities, which the world levels against the unfortunate? Can I indulge in the luxuries of my father's house, when I know that you have neither a home nor subsistence? No, Thaddeus, I am not such a villain. I will not give you up, though my father should load me with curses;—I trust there is a just power above who would avert them."

Perceiving that argument at this time would not only be fruitless, but might probably incense his friend's irritated nature, to the commission of some rash action, Thaddeus pretended to overlook the frantic gesture and voice, which terminated this speech; and, assuming a serene air, replied: "Let this be the subject of future conversation. At present, I must conjure you, by the happiness of

us both, to return to the Castle. You know my message to Sir Robert. Present my respects to your aunt; and," added he, after a pause, "assure Miss Beaufort, that whilst I have life, her goodness will be its most animating principle."

Pembroke interrupted him. "Why these messages, dear Thaddeus? Do not suppose, though I fulfil my father's order to return to Somerset to-night, that it is our separation. Gracious Heaven! Is it so easy to part forever?"

"Not forever! O no;" replied Thaddeus, grasping his hand; "we shall see each other again; only meanwhile repeat those messages to your aunt and cousin. Go, my dear Pembroke, to your father: and may the Lord of heaven bless you!"

The last words were spoken in almost a stifled voice, as he opened his arms and strained his friend to his breast.

"I shall see you to morrow;" cried Pembroke; "on no other condition I leave you now."

Thaddeus made no farther answer to this demand, (which he determined should never be granted,) than a second embrace. Pembroke went out of the room, to order his horses; then returning he stood at the door, and holding out his hand to the count, said, "Farewell, till to-morrow." Thaddeus shook it warmly, and he disappeared.

The outward gate closed after his friend, but the count remained on the seat into which he had thrown himself. He did not venture to move, lest he should by chance catch a second glance of Pembroke from the window. Now that he was gone, he acknowledged the full worth of what he had relinquished. He had resigned a man who loved him; one who had known, and revered his ever-

lamented grandfather and his mother ; the only one with whom he could have discoursed of their virtues ! He had severed the link, which united his present state with his former fortunes ! and throwing his arms along a table that stood near him, he leaned his aching head upon them, and in idea followed, with a bleeding heart, the progress and reception of his friend at the Castle.

The racking misery which tortured the mind of Mr. Somerset was not borne with equal resignation. Conscious of his having inflicted fresh wounds on the breast of his noble friend, his spirits were so ill adapted to society, that he was pleased rather than disappointed, when he found the supper-room at the Castle quite vacant, and only one cover on the table awaiting his arrival.

He asked a few questions of the servants, who informed him that it was past twelve o'clock ; and that Sir Robert, who was worse, had retired to bed early in the evening.

" And where are my aunt and cousin ?" demanded Pembroke.

One of the men replied, that in consequence of Miss Beaufort's having been suddenly indisposed, both the ladies left the room before eleven. Pembroke readily guessed the cause of this disorder : he too truly ascribed it to Mary's anxiety respecting the reception, which the count Sobieski would give to his disgraceful errand ; and sighing bitterly, he said no more, but went to his chamber.

The restless state of his mind awoke Mr. Somerset by times. Anxious for the success of an application, which he intended to make to Miss Beaufort, he traversed the terrace for an hour before he was summoned to breakfast. The baronet continuing unwell, the ladies only were in the parlour

when he entered. Mrs. Dorothy, who learnt the particulars of the late events from her niece, longed to ask Pembroke how his friend would act on her brother's command ; but every time that she moved her lips, his inflamed eye and wan countenance made her stop, and fear to venture on the subject. Mary sat in mute dejection, watching the agitation of her cousin ; and when he rose, and took his hat to leave the room, she looked wistfully towards him. Pembroke turned round at the same moment, and holding out his hand to her, said, " Come, Mary, I want to say something to you. Will you walk with me on the terrace ?"

Miss Beaufort, with trepidation, and a beating heart took his arm, and proceeded in silence, until they reached the gravel walk. A mutual and deep-drawn sigh was the first opening of a conversation, on which the souls of both hung with interest, hope and dread. Pembroke was the first who began.

" My dear, dear Mary," said he, " you are now my sole dependance. From what I told you yesterday of my father's stubborn inflexibility, we can have no hope of his relenting : indeed, after what has passed, I could not flatter myself that Thaddeus Sobieski would, on any account, submit to an obligation at his hands. Already he has refused, with all the indignation I expected, Sir Robert's offer of an annuity. My dear cousin, how can I exist, and yet witness this noble friend in distress, and living without the succour of my friendship ? Heaven knows this must be the case ; for I would sooner perish than venture to insult the man, whom my father has treated so ill, with any pecuniary offers from me ! Therefore, dear girl, it is on you alone that I depend. Thaddeus

adores you, and you love him. Marry him, my beloved cousin," cried he, pressing her hand to his lips, "and relieve my heart from a load of misery! Be generous, my sweet Mary," added he, supporting her now trembling frame against his breast; "act up to your noble nature, and offer him, by me, that hand, which his calamities and disinterestedness preclude him from requesting."

Miss Beaufort, hardly able to articulate, from the emotions which prevented her utterance, replied, "I would give him all that I possess, could it purchase him one tranquil hour; I would serve him forever, could I do it and be unknown; but——"

"O, do not hesitate! Do not doubt!" interrupted Pembroke, "To serve your friends, I know you are capable of the most extraordinary exertions; I know there is nothing within the verge of possibility, that your generous disposition would not attempt: then, my beloved Mary, dare to be what you are, by having the magnanimity to act as you know you ought; by offering your hand to him, shew the noble Sobieski, that you really deserve the devotion of a hero's heart."

"Dear Pembroke," replied Miss Beaufort, wiping the still gliding tears from her burning cheek, "after the confession which you drew from me yesterday, I will not deny, that to possess the esteem of your friend would render me the happiest of created beings; but I cannot believe what your sanguine affection tells me. I cannot suppose, situated as I was at lady Dundas's, under a cloud of fashion, and surrounded by frivolous and contemptible society, that he should discover any thing in me to respect: every way embarrassed as I was, disliking my companions, afraid of my own

interest in him, a veil was drawn over my mind, through which he could neither judge of my good nor bad qualities. How then can I flatter myself, or do the count Sobieski such an injury, as to imagine that he could conceive any preference for such an insignificant character as I must have appeared ?"

It was some time before Pembroke could shake the hold which this prepossession had taken of Miss Beaufort's mind. After having set in every possible light, the terms with which his friend had spoken of her, he at length convinced her, of what her heart so earnestly wished to believe, that she was not entirely indifferent to Sobieski.

Mr. Somerset's next achievement was to overcome her scruples against commissioning him with the message he was desirous to communicate to Thaddeus. From the continual recurrence of her fears, that the warmth of her cousin might have too highly coloured the first object of debate, this task was not more easy to accomplish than the former. In vain she remonstrated, in vain she doubted, in vain demurred; Pembroke would not be denied; and as, with faltering lips, she assented to the permission which he almost extorted, she threw her arms round his neck, and implored him to be careful of her honour; to remember, that she put into his charge, all that was most precious to her,—the modesty of her sex, and her own delicacy.

Pembroke, delighted at this consent, notwithstanding he received it through the medium of many tears, embraced his cousin with ten thousand animating promises of future happiness; and having allowed her to enter the house, mounted his horse, and set off on full gallop towards Harrowby-Hill.

CHAP. XVI.

When Thaddeus recovered from the reverie, into which he fell on the departure of Mr. Somerset, he considered how he might remove out of a country, in which he had only met, and occasioned distress.

The horrid price that Pembroke's father had set on the continuance of their friendship rendered it necessary that his flight should be immediate. Averse to a second interview with his friend, which could only produce them pain, he determined that not another morn should rise upon him in Lincolnshire; and taking a pen, with all the future loneliness of his fate painted on his heart, he wrote two letters.

One he addressed to Mr. Somerset, bidding him that farewell, which he confessed he could never take. As he wrote, his hand trembled, his bosom swelled; and he hastily shut his eye-lids, to withhold his tears from shewing themselves on the paper: his emotion, his grief, were driven back, were concealed; but the tenderness of his soul flowed over the letter. He forgave Pembroke's father, for Pembroke's sake; and in spite of their personal disunion, he vowed, that no earthly power should restrain his love from following the steps of his friend, even into the regions of eternity. He closed his melancholy epistle, with informing Mr. Somerset, that as he should quit England directly, any search after him, which his generous nature might dictate, would be in vain.

Though Thaddeus Sobieski would have disdained a life of dependance on the greatest potentate of the world; though he rejected with the same sincerity, a similar proposal from his friend; and despised the degrading offer of Sir Robert; yet he did not disparage his dignity, nor infringe on the disinterested nature of friendship, when he accepted, and resolved to retain, the money which Pembroke had conveyed to him in prison. Thaddeus never acted but from principle. His honourable and penetrating mind knew exactly at what point to draw the tender thread of delicacy. Pride and independence were with him distinct terms. Receiving assistance from a friend, and leaning on him wholly for support, have different meanings: he accepted the first with gratitude: he would have thought it impossible to live and endure the last. On these premises, Pembroke was never pained by an attempt to return his bounty. Indeed Thaddeus would have considered himself unworthy to confer a benefit, if he had not known how to receive one. This spirit left no part of Miss Beaufort's obligation on his mind, but its sweetness; and with these impressions, and a throbbing heart, he began a short address to her.

"*To Miss Beaufort.*

"My faculties seem to lose their power, when I take up my pen to address, for the first and the last time, Miss Beaufort. I hardly know what I would say, what I ought; I dare not venture to write all that I feel. But have you not been my benefactress? Did you not assert my character, and give me liberty, when I was calumniated and in distress? Did you not ward from me the scorn of unpitying folly? Did you not console me with

your own compassion? You have done all this; and surely you will not despise the gratitude of a heart, which you have condescended to sooth and to comfort. At least, I cannot leave England forever, without imploring blessings on the head of Miss Beaufort; without thanking her on my knees, on which I am writing, for that gracious and benign spirit, which discovered a breaking heart under the mask of serenity; which penetrated through the garb of poverty and dependence, and saw that the contemned Constantine was not what he seemed! Your smiles, Miss Beaufort; your voice, speaking commiseration, were my sweetest consolations during those heavy months of sorrow, which I endured at Dundas-house: I contemplated you as a pitying angel sent to reconcile me to a life, which had already become a burthen. These are the benefits which Miss Beaufort has bestowed on a friendless exile; these are the benefits which she had bestowed on me; and they are written on my soul. Not until I go down into the grave shall they be forgotten. Oh! not even then, for when I rise again, I shall find them still registered there!

"Farewell, most respected, most dear Miss Beaufort. May the Father of heaven bless, with his choicest care, her, whose name shall ever be first in the prayers of her most grateful, most devoted servant,

THADDEUS CONSTANTINE SOBIESKI.

"*Harrowby-Hill,*
eleven o'clock at night."

When he finished this epistle, with a trembling hand he enclosed it in the cover, which contained Somerset's; then writing a few lines to the good

old farmer, he begged him to accept the note which they contained, as a small compensation for his great hospitality; and, having sealed both packets, he disposed them so on the table, that they might be the first things seen on entering the room.

It now being midnight, he thought it high time to set out on his dismal journey. Having tied some linen in a grey silk handkerchief, (which had formerly been wrapped round his neck by lady Sara, one wet evening in Grosvenor-Place;) he put all his remaining money into his pocket. It did not exceed thirty pounds; the rest having been expended in his way to the Abbey, and in defraying little expenses attending the illness of the countess, to which her purse, (ever kept low by the tardiness of the earl's payments) was not prepared to answer. However, as he determined to walk to London, where he intended to embark for America, he hoped that it would at least hold out, until he landed on a shore, whence he trusted never to return.

"Ah!" cried he, as he gently closed the window by which he leaped into the little garden, "What accumulated sins, O Russia, will be heaped upon thy head! Every hasty sigh that rebels in my breast against the Almighty hand, which is again driving me out a wanderer on the wide world, calls vengeance upon thee! How many, wretched country!" added he, resting on the bar of the outward gate; "how many hast thou driven from their homes! how many hast thou made vagabonds and murderers, for that scanty pittance, of which, with remorseless and wanton gripe, they were deprived by thee! Oh, righteous Power of Justice and Mercy!" cried he, stretching his

arms towards that heaven, over which the piercing winds of a bleak October night were scattering the thick and gloomy clouds ; " grant me fortitude to bear, with resignation to thy will, the miseries I may yet have to encounter. Oh !" added he, his heart melting as the idea presented itself ; " teach me to forget what I have been ! Teach me to forget, that on this dreadful night, last year, I clasped the dying body of my dear grandfather in these arms !"

He could not speak farther ; but leaning his pale face against the gate, remained for a few minutes dissolved in painful recollection : then recovering himself by a sudden start, he proceeded with hasty steps through the different meadows, until they conducted him into the high road.

It was on the tenth of October, 1795, that the count Sobieski commenced this lonely and melancholy journey. It was on the tenth of October, 1794, that he found the palatine, bleeding to death, in the midst of a heap of slain. The coincidence of his present sufferings, with those of a twelvemonth past, powerfully affected Thaddeus ; they recalled remembrances to him in their most vivid colours, which time, and the many intermediate events, had considerably softened.

Distressed by these sorrowful scenes, which memory, ever true to her nature, raised before his mind's eye in rapid and long succession, he quickened his pace ; he slackened it ; he quickened it again ; but nothing could rid him of those tormenting images, which seemed to glide around him like visible spirits of the departed.

When the dawn 'broke, and the sun rose, he found himself advanced several miles on the south side of Ponton Hill. The spiry aisles of Harrowby

Abbey were discernible through the mist; and the towers of Somerset Castle, from their height and situation, were as distinctly seen as if he had been at their base. Neither of these objects were calculated to raise the spirits of Thaddeus. The sorrows of the countess, whose eyes he so recently had closed; and the treatment which he afterwards received from the man to whom he owed his life, were recollections which made him turn away from the Abbey with a pang, and fix his eyes on Somerset. He looked towards its ivied head, with all the regret and all the tenderness which can overflow a human heart: under that roof, he believed the eyes of his adored Mary were sealed in sleep; and in an instant his agitated soul addressed her as if she had been present.

"Farewell, most lovely, most beloved! The conviction, that I resign even the hope of ever again beholding thee, to the peace of my friend, shall give me comfort, when I am drawing my breath in a far, far distant region."

In this way, thus communing with his own troubled spirit, he walked forward the whole day on his way to London. Totally absorbed in meditation, he did not remark the gaze of curiosity which followed his elegant yet distressed figure, as he passed through the different towns and villages. Musing on the past, the present, and the future, he neither felt hunger nor thirst; but, with a fixed eye and abstracted countenance, pursued his route, until night and weariness overtook him in the midst of the high road, far from any house.

Thaddeus looked around, and above: the sky was clear, and glittering with stars; the moon, shining on a near branch of the Ouse, which divides Huntingdonshire from Cambridgeshire, lit

the green heath which skirted its banks. He wished not for a more magnificent canopy ; and, placing his wallet under his head, he lay down beneath a hillock of furze and broom, and slept till morning.

When he awoke from a sleep, which fatigue and fasting had rendered more oppressive than refreshing, he found that the splendours of the night were succeeded by a heavy rain, and that he was very wet. He rose, with a stiffness in his limbs, a pain in his head, and a dimness over his eyes, which almost disabled him from moving. He readily judged that he had caught cold ; and every moment feeling himself grow worse, he thought it necessary to seek some house, where he might purchase rest and assistance.

To this end, leaning on his stick, but no longer able to incumber himself with even the light load of his bundle, he threw it amongst the brambles ; thinking from the symptoms which he felt, that he had not many hours to endure the ills of life, he staggered a few yards farther : no habitation appeared ; his limbs became more feeble, his eyes seemed totally obscured, and he sunk down on a bank. For a minute he attempted to struggle with the cold grasp of death, which he believed was fastening on his heart.

" And are my days to be so short ! Are they to end thus ?" thought he ; " Merciful Providence, pardon my repining !"

These were the last movements of the lips of Thaddeus, whilst his blood seemed freezing to insensibility. His eyes closed, his head fell back ; and pale and without animation, he lay at the foot of the tree near which he had dropt.

The count remained a quarter of an hour in this death-like state before he was perceived ; at

length a gentleman, who was passing that road in his way to a country seat in Cambridgeshire, thought he perceived a man lying amongst the grass a little onward on the heath. The traveller stopt his carriage, and ordering one of the out-riders to alight, bade him examine whether the object he saw were living or dead.

The man obeyed; and presently returning, with an affrightened countenance, informed his master, that it was the body of a man, who by his dress appeared to be a gentleman; and who, being quite senseless, he supposed had been murdered by robbers. The features of the benevolent stranger instantly reflected the distress of his servant's: but ordering the chariot door to be opened, he took in his hand a bottle of drops, (which from his own invalid state, was his travelling companion,) and alighting hastened to the side of the lifeless Thaddeus.

By this time, all the servants were collected round the spot; and the good man himself, whilst he gazed with pity on the marble features of the count, observed with pleasure, that he saw no marks of violence. Supposing that the present accident might have been occasioned by a fit; and thinking it possible by proper means to recal life, he desired that the unfortunate person's waistcoat might be unclosed; and taking off his hat he contrived to pour some drops into his mouth. Their warmth renewed pulsation in the heart; for one of the servants who was stooping, declared that it beat under his hand. When the benevolent gentleman was satisfied that this report was true, he ordered his servants to place the poor traveller in his carriage; having only another mile to go, he said he hoped that his charge might be restored at the end of their journey.

Whilst the postilions drove in full gallop towards the house, the cold face of Thaddeus rested on the bosom of the stranger, who continued to chafe his temples with lavender water, until the chariot stopped before the gates. Two men carried the count to the house; and having left him with their master, and a medical man, who resided near, other restoratives were applied, which succeeded in recovering his lost senses. When he was completely recalled to recollection, and was able to look around, and distinguish objects, he saw that he was supported by two gentlemen, and in a magnificent bed-chamber.

Gratitude was an active virtue in the soul of Thaddeus. At the moment of his awakening from that sleep, which, when it fell upon him, he believed would last until time should be lost in eternity,—he pressed the hands of them who held his own; not doubting but that they were the good Samaritans who had preserved him from perishing.

The younger of the gentlemen, perceiving by the animated lustre which spread over his patient's eyes, that he was going to speak, put his hand on his lips, and said, "Pardon me, Sir! you must not speak. Your life at present hangs on a thread; the slightest exertion would snap it: but, as all you want, is rest and resuscitation, to supply some great expense, which the vital powers have sustained, I must require you neither to speak, nor be spoken to, until I give permission. Meanwhile, be satisfied, Sir, that you are in the most honourable hands. This gentleman," added he, pointing to his friend, "saw you on the heath, and brought you to his house, where you now are."

Thaddeus bowed his head to them both in sign of gratitude and compliance; and the elder left the room.

CHAP. XVII.

Next morning, when the seal was taken off the lips of Thaddeus, he expressed, in the most animated terms, his deep sense of the humanity which actuated both the gentlemen, to take such a generous interest in his fate.

"You owe no thanks to me," replied the one who had enjoined, and released him from silence, and who was alone with him; "I am only the agent of another. Yet, I do not deny, that in obeying the benevolent orders of Sir Robert Somerset, I have frequent opportunities of gratifying my own heart."

Thaddeus was so confounded at this discovery, that he could not speak, and the gentleman proceeded.

"I am apothecary to Sir Robert's household; and, as my excellent master has been long afflicted with an ill state of health, I live in a small lodge at the other end of the park. He is the boast of the country; the best landlord, and the kindest neighbour. All ranks of people love him; and when he dies (which his late apoplectic fits make it too probable will be soon,) both poor and rich will lose their friend. Ill as he was this morning, when I told him that you were out of danger, he expressed a pleasure, which did more good to him than all my medicines."

Thaddeus, not considering the wildness of the question, hastily demanded, "Does he know who I am?"

The honest apothecary stared at the look and tone of voice, with which these words were delivered, and then replied, "No; is there any reason, Sir, to make you wish that he should not?"

"Certainly none:" replied Thaddeus, recollecting himself, and sighing; "and I shall be impatient, until I have an opportunity of telling him, how grateful I am for the goodness which he has shewn to me as a stranger."

The apothecary, surprised at these hints, (which the count, not considering their tendency, allowed to escape him,) gathered sufficient from them, united with the speaker's superior mien, to make him suppose that his patient was some emigrant of quality, whom Sir Robert would rejoice in having served. These surmises and conclusions having passed very quickly through the honest gentleman's brain, he bowed his head, with that respect, which the generous mind is proud to pay to nobility in ruins, and resumed:

"Whatever you may be, Sir, a peasant, or a prince, you will meet with British hospitality from the noble owner of this house. The magnificence of his spirit is equalled by the goodness of his heart; and Deerhurst will afford every comfort to you, that benevolence and wealth can bestow; and I am certain, that Sir Robert will consider the dreadful apoplexy, which brought him from Somerset for change of air, rather fortunate, than otherwise, as it has afforded him an opportunity of serving, and of knowing you."

Thaddeus blushed at the strain of this speech; and, readily understanding what was passing in the mind of the apothecary, hardly knew how to reply. He paused for a moment, and then said, "All you

have declared, Sir, in praise of Sir Robert Somerset, I cannot have a doubt of his deserving. I have already felt the effects of his humanity, and shall ever remember that my life was prolonged by his means; but I have no pretensions to the honour of his acquaintance. I only wish to see him, that I may thank him for what he has done; therefore, if you will permit me to rise this evening, instead of to-morrow morning, you will oblige me."

To this request, the apothecary gave a respectful, yet firm denial; and went down stairs, to communicate his observations to his patron.

The anxiety which agitated the count's mind, when he reflected, that he was receiving these obligations from his most implacable enemy, so occupied and disturbed him, that he spent a sleepless night. The dawn found his fever much augmented; but no corporeal sufferings could persuade him to abandon the resolution of seeing the baronet, and immediately leaving his house; believing, as he did, that all his kindness would have been withheld, had his host known on whom he was pouring such benefits, he thought that every minute which passed over him, while he was under Sir Robert's roof, inflicted a new outrage on his dignity and honour.

To this end then, as soon as Mr. Middleton the apothecary retired to breakfast, Thaddeus rose from his bed, and was completely dressed before he returned. The good man expostulated on the rashness of what he had done, and augured no less than a relapse from the morning symptoms of his patient. Thaddeus once in his life was obstinate, though civilly so; and desiring a servant to request that Sir Robert would indulge him with an audience for a few minutes alone in his library, he

soon convinced Mr. Middleton, that his purpose was not to be shaken.

The baronet returning his compliments, that he should be happy to see his guest, the still anxious apothecary offered him his assistance down the stairs. Thaddeus needed no help, and gratefully declined it. The exertion necessary to be summoned for this interview imparted as much momentary strength to his frame as to his mind, and though his colour was heightened, he entered the library with a firm step.

Sir Robert met him at the door, and, shaking him by the hand, with many warm assurances of pleasure at his recovery, would have led him to a seat; but Thaddeus drawing back, only supported himself against the back of it with his hand; whilst in a steady voice, he expressed the most animated thanks for the benefits he had received; then pausing and casting the proud lustre of his eyes to the ground, lest their language should tell all that he thought, he continued, "I have only to regret, Sir Robert, that your benevolence has been lavished on a man whom you regard with abhorrence. I am the count Sobieski, that Polander, whom you commanded your son to see no more. Respecting even the prejudices of my friend's parent, I was hastening to London, meaning to set sail for America with the first ship, when I swooned on the road. I believe I was expiring; your humanity saved me: and I now owe to gratitude, as well as to my own satisfaction, the fulfilment of my declaration. I shall leave Deerhurst immediately, and England, as soon as I am able to embark."

Thaddeus, with a second bow, and not quite so firm a step, without venturing a glance, at what he supposed were the abashed looks of the baronet, was

preparing to quit the room, when Sir Robert, with a pale and aghast countenance, exclaimed, "Stop!"

Thaddeus looked round, and regarded him with wonder. The baronet, incapable of saying more, pointed to a chair for him to set down; then sinking into another himself, took out his handkerchief, and wiping away the large drops, which stood on his forehead, panted for respiration. At last, with a desperate kind of haste, he said:

"Was your mother, indeed, Therese Sobieski?"

Thaddeus, still more astonished, replied in the affirmative: and Sir Robert threw himself back on the chair with a deep groan. Hardly knowing what he did, the count rose from his seat, and advanced towards him: Sir Robert, hearing his approach, stretched out his hand, and, with a look and tone of agony, said, "Who was your father?" and then, without waiting for a reply, covered his convulsed features with his handkerchief. The baronet's agitation, which now shook him like an earthquake, became contagious; Thaddeus gazed at him with a palsying uncertainty in his heart; and laying his hand on his bewildered brain, he answered, "I know not. I believe the earl of Tinemouth. But here is his picture." With a trembling hand he took the case which held it out of his pocket; and, tearing open the clasps, he gave it to Sir Robert, who had started from his seat at the name of the earl. The moment the baronet's eyes rested on the miniature, he threw it from him, and fell senseless upon the chair.

Thaddeus, hardly more alive, sprinkled some water on his face, and with throbbing temples and a beating heart stood in wordless expectation over him. Such excessive emotion told him, that something more than Sir Robert's hatred of the Po-

landers had stimulated his late conduct; and too earnest for an explanation, to ring for assistance, he rejoiced to see, by the convulsion of the baronet's features, and the heaving of his chest, that animation was returning. In a few minutes he opened his eyes, but when he met the anxious gaze of Thaddeus, he closed them as suddenly, and rising from his seat, staggered against the chimney-piece, exclaiming, "O God, direct me."

Thaddeus, whose conjectures were now wrought almost to wildness, followed him, and whilst his exhausted frame was ready to sink to the earth, implored him to speak.

"O Sir," cried he, "If you know any thing about my family; if you know any thing about my father, in pity answer me: Or, only tell me: am I so wretched as to be the son of lord Tinemouth?"

The violence of the count's emotions, during this agonizing petition, totally overcame him; before he finished speaking, his limbs withdrew their support; and, sinking down on his knees, his head dropped breathless against the side of a chair: Though incapable of standing, his beseeching and eager eyes were yet rivetted on the baronet's averted face.

Sir Robert turned hastily round. He saw him sunk, like a beautiful flower, bruised and trampled on, by the wanton foot of him who had given it root: unable to make any evasive reply, to this last appeal of virtue and of nature, he threw himself with a burst of tears upon his neck, and exclaimed, "Wretch that I have been! O, Sobieski! *I* am thy father. Dear, injured son of the unhappy Therese!"

The first words which carried this avowal to the heart of Thaddeus deprived it of motion; and

when Sir Robert expected to receive the returning embrace of his son, he found him senseless in his arms.

The cries of the baronet brought Mr. Middleton and the servants into the room. When the former saw the state of the count, and perceived the agonizing position of his patron, (who was supporting and leaning over his son,) the honest man declared, that he expected nothing less from the gentleman's disobedience of his orders. The presence of the servants having recalled Sir Robert's wandering faculties, he desired them to remove Thaddeus to his chamber. Then following them in silence when they had laid their charge on the bed, he watched, in extreme but concealed anxiety, until Mr. Middleton, by opening a vein, again brought animation to his patient.

The moment the count unclosed his eyes, they fixed themselves on his agitated father. He drew the hand which held his, to his lips. The tears of paternal love again bathed the cheeks of Sir Robert; he felt how warm at his heart was the affection of his deserted son; (and making a sign for Mr. Middleton to leave the room, who obeyed;) he bent his streaming eyes upon the other hand of Thaddeus, and said, in a faltering voice, "Can you pardon me?"

Thaddeus threw himself on his father's bosom, and wept profusely; then raising Sir Robert's clasped hands in his, whilst his eloquent eyes seemed to search the heavens, he said, "My dear, dear mother, loved you to her latest hour, and I have all my mother's heart: whatever may have been your faults, I love my father."

Sir Robert strained him to his breast. After a pause, whilst he shook the tears from his silver eye-

lashes, he resumed, "Certain, my dear son, that you require repose, and assured that you will not find it, until I have offered some apology for my unnatural conduct, I will now explain the various circumstances which impelled my actions, and drew distress upon that noble creature, your mother."

Sir Robert hesitated a moment to recover breath, and then went on.

"Keep your situation;" added he, putting down Thaddeus, who at this opening was raising himself; "I shall tell my melancholy story with less pain, if your eyes be not upon me. I will begin from the first."

The baronet proceeded to say, "That very early in life he attached himself to Miss Beaufort, the only sister of the late Admiral Beaufort, who was Mary's father; they were then wards of Sir Fulke Somerset. Mr. Beaufort had been in the navy from a boy; but his sister remaining always at the castle, an affection as strong as it was mutual took place between herself and her cousin Robert. When the young people applied to Sir Fulke for his consent to their marriage, he refused it on the plea of their youth. In vain the passionate Robert declared the reasonableness, and ardour of his affection; his father urged his being only a younger son; and, indeed that he was totally unworthy of his ward, unless he would consent to undergo the polish of a three years' tour over the continent. After much altercation, this arrangement was complied with; and Robert and Miss Beaufort bade each other a melancholy adieu. Indignant at the unfeeling whim of Sir Fulke; and, provoked with his elder brother, for seconding his father's arguments, Robert Somerset set off

for Dover ; where he was joined by the present earl of Tinemouth, (then Mr. Stanhope,) who was banished the country on a similar errand : but his was to forget a mistress ; Somerset's to deserve one. Stanhope's mother and Robert's having been sisters, the young men met as relations ; mutually enraged at their fathers, (their mothers having been long dead,) they determined to change their names, and to let no one know any thing about them during their travels, except the two women who they best loved. To this end, as soon as they crossed the Channel, and landed in France, they gave themselves out to be brothers ; which their great personal resemblance corroborated, and called themselves Sackville. This business settled, they travelled pretty amicably until they reached Naples : Here Mr. Stanhope involved himself in a very dishonourable intrigue with the only daughter of an old British officer, who had retired to that climate for his health. Somerset remonstrated on the villany of seducing an innocent girl, when he knew that his heart and hand were absolutely devoted to another ; and Stanhope, enraged at finding a censor in a companion, whom he considered as headstrong as himself, ended the argument by striking him. Somerset drew his sword ; and it is likely if the servants of the hotel had not interfered, the affray would have terminated with one of their lives. Since that hour they never met again. Mr. Stanhope left his shame, and his bleeding friend ; and fearful of consequences fled to Palermo. Robert Somerset, when recovered from his wounds, (still retaining the name of Sackville,) took the way to Florence ; in which beautiful city, determining to stay some time, he rather sought than repelled the civilities of the inhabi-

tants. Here he became acquainted with the palatine, and the lovely Therese, whose affections he so completely won. Soon after this intimacy commenced, Miss Beaufort ceased to answer his letters. Desperate with jealousy, he was on the point of going to England, when he received a packet from home. On opening it, he found a letter from Miss Beaufort, in which she informed him, that having long considered their attachment, as a childish entanglement, she had tried to wean him from his former folly, by an obstinate silence. Having hardly a doubt that she had succeeded, she now broke through her resolution, as it was to shew him at once, the unreasonableness of making such early engagements. Soon after his departure, a journey up to town taught her to know her own heart; and in consequence she had yielded her hand to Mr. Somerset, his elder brother; who had always been averse to her marriage with Robert. This shameless declaration concluded with a long homily of advice against similar fetters, and the insult of subscribing herself his "affectionate sister," &c. Having read the letter to the end, he forswore his family forever, and flying to Therese Sobieski, in a paroxysm of madness and revenge, married her. This rash act perpetrated, he in vain sought for tranquillity; he saw that she idolized him, but his thoughts were always fixed on his ungrateful Mary; were always deploring her lightness, and execrating the perfidy of his brother. In this temper a second packet found him. Again he saw Miss Beaufort's hand-writing, but he dropt it with horror into the envelope, and tore open the black seal which was affixed to a letter from his father. Here Sir Fulke confessed such a plan of deceit as petrified his son. He

declared, that all which had passed was devised by Mr. Somerset, in hopes of tempting him to revenge the affront which Mary had put upon him, by a hasty marriage. The wretched old man, with many prayers for pardon, acknowledged that this bitter confession was wrung from him by the sudden death of his eldest son, who now lay a corpse in the house. The disconsolate father having related the particulars of Mr. Somerset's death, (which happened after three days' illness) added, it was in compliance with his entreaties to preserve Miss Beaufort for him, that he had agreed to drive Robert from the kingdom. To further the scheme, of making the separation be forever, he had intercepted all their mutual letters ; and, Mr. Somerset himself, had forged that one in Miss Beaufort's name, which carried the intelligence of their union. By the same means, a similar effect was wrought upon the abused Mary ; believing Robert unfaithful, she fell into a melancholy, and evinced a carelessness to exterior objects, which they hoped might in time induce her, through mere weakness of mind, to give her hand to the persecuting passion of Mr. Somerset. "But," continued Sir Fulke, "death has put an end to this unnatural rivalry ; and my poor girl, undeceived in her opinion of you, pants to see you, and to give you that hand, which my ill-fated son, and your unhappy father, so unjustly detained."

On the receipt of this packet, with a soul divided between love, humanity, and honour, Robert Somerset sacrificed all to his passions. He adored the woman on whose account he had left his country ; and, though every tie of heaven and earth bound him to his deceived and injured wife, he

consigned her to the full horrors of such desertion, and hastened to England.

"Shameful to relate," added Sir Robert, "immediately on my landing I married Mary Beaufort. In her arms I forgot for a while, Therese and her agonies. But when my dear Pembroke first saw the light, when I prest him to my heart, it seemed as if at the same instant I stabbed it with a dagger. When I would have breathed a blessing over him, the conviction struck me, that I durst not; that I had deluded the mother who gave him birth; and that at some future period, he might have cause to curse the author of his existence. Well," continued the baronet, wiping his forehead, "though the birth of this boy conjured up the image of your mother, which haunted me day and night, I never could summon courage to inquire respecting her fate. When the troubles of Poland commenced, what a dreadful terror seized me! The success of the Russians, and the consequent distresses of the nobility, overwhelmed me with fear; I knew not, but they might be forced, like the French noblesse, to fly their country; and the bare idea of meeting your grandfather, or the injured Therese, in England, precipitated me into such a series of apprehensions, as menaced my life. I became melancholy and ill; I avoided the sight of the newspapers; and, as far as I could, (under the plea of the story which you have heard,) I withheld my family from speaking on a subject which manifestly gave me pain. But I could not prevent the tongues of our visitors from discoursing on a theme, which at that period interested every thinking mind. I heard of the valiant Kosciuszko, the good Stanislaus, and the palatine Sobieski with his brave grandson, spoken of in the

same breath. I durst not surmise who this grandson was ; I durst not ask ; I dreaded to know. At length," added he, quickening his voice, " the idol of my heart, she for whom I had perhaps sacrificed my eternal peace, died in my arms ! I received the shock as became a christian ; I bent beneath the blow with humility ; for I embraced it as the expiation of a crime, which, till then, even in the midst of my felicity, sat on my soul like the hand of death. I bore this trial with resignation. But, when two years afterwards, my eye fell, by accident, upon the name of Sobieski, in one of the public papers, I could not withdraw it ; my sight was fascinated as if by a rattlesnake ; and, in one column I read, how bravely the palatine fell ; and, in the next, the dreadful fate of his daughter. She was revenged !" cried Sir Robert, eagerly grasping the hand of Thaddeus, who could not restrain the groan which burst from his breast. " I was deprived of that reason which had abused her noble nature, for near three months afterwards. When I recovered my senses," continued he, after a pause, " and found that I had so fatally suffered the time of restitution to go by, I began to torment myself, that I had not, on the death of lady Somerset, hastened to Poland, and entreated Therese's pardon on my knees. This period of vivid remorse was soon terminated, by the same arguments, which, on the first year of my wife's loss, deterred me from being just. I reconsidered, that the countess Sobieski having possessed a prior claim to my name, such restitution on my part, must, in consequence, have illegitimized my darling Pembroke. It was this horrid conviction," exclaimed Sir Robert, a sudden distraction agitating his before affectionate eye, " that caused all

my cruelty to you. When my dear son described the danger from which you had rescued him; when he told me, that Therese had fostered him with a mother's tenderness; I was probed to the heart: but when he added, that the young count Sobieski was now an alien from his country, and relying on my friendship for a home, my terror was too truly manifested. Horror drove all natural remorse from my soul. I thought an avenging power had sent my deserted child to discover his father, to claim his rights, and to publish me as a villain: and when I saw my innocent son, even on his knees, petitioning for the man, who I believed was come to undo him, I became almost frantic. Under this temper," added he, putting the trembling hand of Thaddeus to his streaming eyes, "I drove out my first born, to be a guiltless wanderer on the face of the earth; not for his own crimes, but for those of his father: and Heaven punished my injustice. When I thought that the evidence of my shame was divided from me by an insuperable barrier; when I believed that the ocean would soon separate me from all my fears, a righteous Providence brought thee before me, forlorn and expiring. It was the son of Therese Sobieski, that I had exposed to such wretchedness! It was the darling of her heart, that I had consigned to the beating elements! O, Thaddeus," cried he, "can I be forgiven for all this?"

Thaddeus lulled the wakeful remorse of his venerable father, with such kind arguments of excuse for his conduct, as at least imparted to him a consoling assurance in the generous affection of his son.

When this long and interesting conversation terminated, Sir Robert, well remembering the violent effects of Mr. Somerset's grief, at Sobieski's flight and declared abjuration of England, pardoned his son the outrageous reproaches, which had driven him from his own house; and very joyfully dispatched a messenger to desire his presence at Deerhurst.

CHAP. XVIII.

That sickness, which is the consequence of mental pain, usually vanishes with its cause. Long before the evening of the ensuing day, Thaddeus quitted his chamber, and related to his father the rapid incidents of his brief and eventful career. The voice of fame had blazoned him abroad, as '*the plume of war, with early laurels crowned*;' but it was left to his own eloquent tongue, to prove, with all the pathos of modesty and feeling, that the most desperate conflicts are not those which we sustain in the field.

Sir Robert listened to him with affection, admiration, and delight. He was answering the interesting detail, with many grateful apostrophes to that providence, which had crowned his old age with pardon and peace, when the servant opened the door, and announced, that Mr. Somerset was in the library.

Thaddeus instantly rose; but Sir Robert put him down again. "Remain here, my dear son," said he, "until I apprise your brother how nearly you are related to him. That door leads into my study; I will call you when he is prepared."

The moment Sir Robert joined Pembroke, he read in his pale and harassed countenance, how much he required the intelligence which he came to communicate. Mr. Somerset bowed coldly on his father's entrance, and begged to be honoured with his commands.

"They are, what I expect will restore to you, your usual looks and manner, my dear boy," an-

swered his father, taking his passive hand, and seating him by him ; "so attend to me."

Pembroke listened to the beginning of the baronet's narrative with respectful attention ; but when the name of Therese Sobieski was mentioned as the woman whom he had married and deserted ; the ready apprehension of his son conceiving the rest, he had only to affirm his eager demand, that Thaddeus was indeed his brother. Pembroke looked wildly around him.

"O, my father !" cried he, "what have you done ? Where is he ? For what have you sacrificed him ?"

"Hear me to an end," rejoined the baronet, who then, in as few words as possible, repeated the consequent events, with the recent meeting.

Pembroke's raptures were now as high as his despair had been deep. He threw himself on his father's breast ; he asked for his friend, his brother ; and begged to be conducted to him. Sir Robert did no more than open the door, which divided the library from the dining-room, and in one moment the brothers were locked in each other's arms.

Their father, with a speechless tongue, but an eloquent heart, stood over them with uplifted hands, invoking the spirits of their beatified mothers, to behold this heavenly scene.

The transports of the young men for a long time denied them words, but their eyes, their tears, and their united hands, imparted to each breast a consciousness of mutual love, unutterable, if not to be expressed by those looks, which are indeed the true heralds of the soul.

Sir Robert wept like an infant whilst contemplating these two affectionate brothers ; in a

faltering voice he exclaimed, "How soon may these plighted hands be separated by the harpies of the law! Alas, Pembroke, you cannot be ignorant that I buy this son at the price of your legitimacy!"

At this speech, the blood rushed over the cheek of the ingenuous Pembroke; but Thaddeus turning instantly to Sir Robert, said, with a smile,

"On this head, I trust that neither my father nor my brother will entertain one thought to trouble them. Had I even the inclination to act otherwise than right, my revered grandfather has put it out of my power to bear any other name than that of Sobieski. He made me swear never to change it; and, as I hope to meet him hereafter," added he, with solemnity, "I will obey him! Therefore, my beloved father, in secret only can I enjoy the conviction that I am your son, and Pembroke's brother: yet, the happiness I receive with the knowledge of being so, will ever live here; will ever animate my heart with gratitude to Heaven and you."

"Noble son of the sainted Therese!" cried Sir Robert, "I do not deserve thee."

"How shall I merit your care of my honour! of my dearest feelings?" exclaimed Pembroke, pressing the hands of his brother to his heart, "I can do nothing, dearest Thaddeus. I am a bankrupt in the means of evincing what is passing in my soul. My mother's chaste spirit thanks you from my lips; yet I will not abuse your generosity; though I retain the name of Somerset, it shall only be the name; the inheritance entailed on my father's eldest son belongs to you."

Whilst Thaddeus embraced his brother with affection, he calmly and firmly replied, that he

would rather encounter all the probable miseries, from which his father's benevolence had saved him, than rob his brother of any part of what he believed to be justly his due.

Sir Robert, with hatred of himself, and admiration of his sons, attempted to stop this generous contention, by saying, that should be determined by an equal division of his estates.

"Not so, my dear father," replied Thaddeus; "I will never consent that the title of Somerset shall want wealth to support the munificence of its possessor."

After a few more arguments, of the same tendency, the controversy was settled; and the remainder of the evening passed in that sweet reciprocity of confidence and bliss, which the imagination can best picture.

According to the decisions of this night, Sir Robert wrote next morning to his sister, informing her that accident had introduced Pembroke's friend, the count Sobieski, to his presence; when, to his amazement and joy, he discovered, that this celebrated young hero, though of a nation to which he had declared an abhorrence, was the only remaining branch of a family to which he owed unnumbered obligations. He added, that five-and-twenty years ago, having contracted an immense debt with the palatine of Masovia,—as a small compensation, he now signed over to the count, (who would resume all the distinctions of his rank) the house and estates of Deerhurst, to the amount of three thousand a year. He told her, that Pembroke did not deem such subtraction from the rent-roll of Somerset any loss; for twelve thousand annually would yet remain; and could his wishes have been complied with, he would have divided his whole

patrimony with his friend. He closed his letter, with many expressions of impatience, to present to his sister and niece, their interesting *emigre* under a character which reflected honour on their discernment.

This epistle was put into the hands of Mrs. Dorothy, by a courier, as she was following Miss Beaufort and lady Albina Stanhope into the travelling coach. Mrs. Dorothy having seated herself, read it aloud to both the young ladies; at every welcome word, the heart of the amazed and overjoyed Mary throbbed with exultation, hope, and gratitude. The good old lady was not backward in demonstrating astonishment. Surprised at her brother's rencontre with Thaddeus, but more at his avowal of obligations to any of that nation, about which he always had asserted directly the reverse, she was so wrapped in wonder and pleasure, that her ever cheerful tongue lightened her happy heart, by relating to the attentive lady Albina, the public, as well as private history, of the count Sobieski.

When the carriage arrived at Deerhurst, it was past midnight; and, to the no small disappointment of the ladies, the family were retired to bed. Mrs. Dorothy, who would not suffer her brother to be disturbed, sent the girls to their rooms; and was crossing one of the galleries to her own apartment, when a door opening, Pembroke, in his night-gown and slippers, looked out. Having heard a bustle in the house, he was going to inquire the reason, just as his aunt appeared. She kissed him, bade him good night, told him to prepare for something pleasing in the morning; and, smiling, hurried to her chamber.

Pembroke thought so little of Mrs. Dorothy's lively promise, that he was almost the last who de-

scended to the breakfast-parlour. Mrs. Dorothy reproached him for his undutiful laziness; while Miss Beaufort, with a glowing cheek, embraced her cousin, who whispered, "Now I shall see the two dearest friends I possess happy in each other."

Mary's vivid blush had not subsided, when the sudden entrance of Thaddeus, and his agitated bow, overspread her face and neck with crimson. A dimness obscured her faculties; she hardly heard the animated words of Sir Robert, whilst he presented him as the count Sobieski, the darling son of one who had deserved the highest place in his heart. Whatever he was, she was conscious that he was lord of hers; and withdrawing her hand hastily from the timid and thrilling touch of him, she would have lingered near forever, she glided back towards an open casement, where the fresh air helped to dispel the faintness which seized her.

After Mrs. Dorothy, with all the urbanity of her nature, had declared her welcomes to the count, she put away the coffee that was handed to her by Pembroke, and said with a smile, "Before I taste my breakfast, I must inform you, Sir Robert, that you have a guest in this house whom you little expect. I forbade Miss Beaufort saying a word, because, as we are told that '*the first tellers of unwelcome news have but a losing office*;' *vice versa*, I hoped for a *gaining* one; therefore detained such a pleasing piece of intelligence for my own promulgation. Indeed, I doubt, whether it will not intoxicate some folks here!"—added she, glancing archly on Pembroke, who looked suddenly round at this whimsical declaration: "suffice it to say, that yesterday morning, lady Albina Stanhope, more dead than alive, accompanied by her maid, arrived in a post-chaise at Somerset-Castle, and

implored my protection. Our dear Mary embraced the poor weeping young creature, who, amidst many tears, recapitulated the injuries which she had suffered, since she parted with the count Sobieski at the Abbey. The latest outrage of her cruel father was his immediate marriage with the vile lady Sophia Lovel, and his commands, that lady Albina would treat her as became a daughter. Ill as her ladyship was, when she received these disgraceful orders, she determined to escape them, and the degradation they would otherwise cast on the memory of her own mother, by instantly quitting the house. To this end she engaged her maid to assist her flight; '*and*, added she, '*Whither could I go? Who would receive the unfortunate victim of the profligate lady Sophia? I could think of none so likely as the father of the generous Mr. Somerset. He told me we were relations; I beseech you to be my friend!*' Certain of your benevolence, my dear brother," continued Mrs. Dorothy, "I stopped this sweet girl's petition, with my caresses, and promised her a kinder father in Sir Robert Somerset."

"You did right, Dorothy," returned the baronet; "though the earl and I must ever be strangers, I have no enmity against his children. Where is this amiable lady Albina?"

Mrs. Dorothy informed him, that in consequence of her recent grief and ill-treatment, her ladyship found herself too unwell to rise with the family; but that she hoped to join them at noon.

Pembroke was, indeed, deeply interested in this intelligence. The simple graces of the lovely Albina, on the first interview, had penetrated his heart. Her sufferings at Harrowby, and the sensibility which her ingenuous nature exhibited, with-

out affectation or disguise, had left her image in his soul, long after she disappeared. He now gave the reins to his eager imagination, and was the first in the saloon to greet his lovely mistress.

Sir Robert Somerset welcomed her with the warmth of a parent : but his animated and enraptured son broke out into the most vehement expressions of joy, which she received with timid and grateful bows.

During this scene, Miss Beaufort, no longer able to bear the restraint of company, nor even the accidental glances of Sobieski, (whose presence, dear as it was, disconcerted and oppressed her,) walked out into the park. Though it was the month of October, the weather continued fine. A bright sun tempered the air, and gilded the yellow leaves, which the fresh wind drove before her in a thousand glittering eddies. This was Mary's favourite season. She found its softness diffuse the tenderest melancholy through her soul. The rugged form of care seems to dissolve under the magic touch of beautiful nature. Forgetful of the world's anxieties, the tranquillizing spirit of meditation shades the heart of sorrow with a veil, which might well be called the twilight of the mind ; and the entranced soul, happy in delusion, half closes its bright eye, reluctant to perceive that such sweet repose rests in error.

Such were the reflections of Miss Beaufort, after her disturbed thoughts had tossed themselves in a sea of doubts, relative to the interest which she might probably possess in the heart of Sobieski. Wearied out with suspense, she resolved to resign her future fate to Providence ; and, turning her gaze on the lovely objects around, soon found the genius of the season absorb her wholly. Her

cheeks glowed, her eyes became humid, and casting their mild radiance on the fading flowers beneath, she pursued her way through a cloud of fragrance. It was the last breath of the expiring year. Love is full of imagination. Mary easily glided from the earth's departing charms to her own waning beauty : the chord once touched, every note revibrated : and hope and fear, joy and regret, again dispossessed her late acquired serenity.

It being almost three o'clock, lady Albina having expressed a wish to walk out in search of Miss Beaufort, the two brothers offered their attendance. Before her ladyship had passed through the first park, she complained of fatigue ! Pembroke, alarmed, urged her to enter a shepherd's hut, close by, whilst the count Sobieski would proceed alone in quest of his cousin.

Thaddeus, with a beating heart, undertook this commission ; and bounding over the rustic bridge, which crosses the Witham, hastened along the nearest dell. With the lightness of a young hunter, he mounted the heights, descended to the vallies, traversed one woody nook, and then another, but could see no trace of Miss Beaufort. Induced to suppose that she had returned to the house, he was slackening his pace, to abandon the search, when he caught a glimpse of her figure, as she turned the corner of a thicket leading to the terrace above. In an instant he was at her side ; and with his hat in his hand, and a glowing cheek, he repeated his errand.

Mary blushed, faltered, and was alarmed at finding herself alone with Thaddeus. Though he now stood before her in a quality, which she ever believed was his right, yet remembrance of what

had passed between them, when in other circumstances, confounded and overwhelmed her. When Constantine was poor and unfriended, it was delicious to pity and to love him. When the same Constantine appeared as a man of rank, invested with a splendid fortune, and extensive fame, she was lost, annihilated. The cloud which had obscured, not extinguished his glory, was dispersed. He was that Sobieski whom she had admired unseen; he was that Constantine whom she had loved unknown; he was that Sobieski, that Constantine, who, seen and known, she now adored.

Weighed down by the weight of these reflections, she only bowed to what he said; and gathering her cloak from the winds, which blew it around her, was hurrying, with downward eyes, to the stairs of the terrace, when her foot slipping, she must have fallen, had not Thaddeus caught her on his arm. She rose from it with a face blushing like scarlet; and that colour did not recede, when she found that he had not relinquished her hand. Her heart beat violently, her head became giddy, her feet trembled; and finding that, after a slight motion of her arm he still held it fast, nearly overcome by inexplicable distress, she turned away her face to conceal its confusion.

Thaddeus saw all this, and, with a fluttering hope, instead of surrendering the hand he had retained, he made it a yet closer prisoner, by grasping it in both his; and, pressing it earnestly to his breast, said, in a hurried voice, whilst his eloquent eyes poured all their beams upon her averted cheek, "Surely, Miss Beaufort will not deny me the dearest happiness I possess?—the privilege of being grateful to her."

He paused : his soul was too full for utterance ; and raising Mary's hand from his heart to his lips, he kissed it fervently. Almost fainting, Miss Beaufort leaned her head, which she was now unable to support, against a tree of the thicket where they were standing, and waved her other hand, in sign for him to leave her.

Such extraordinary agitation palsied the warm and blissful emotions of the count. Dreading that he had offended her, that she might suppose he presumed on her kindness, he stood for a moment, in silent astonishment ; then, dropping on his knee, (hardly conscious of doing so,) with an energy of action and voice declarative of all the impetuous passion, which he had so long smothered in his heart, he implored her pardon for what had passed.

" Forgive me," added he, with increased earnestness ; " forgive me, in justice to your own virtues. I meant only to thank you for your goodness to an unfortunate exile ; but if my words or manner have obeyed the more fervid impulse of my soul, and declared aloud, what is its glory in secret, blame my nature, most respected Miss Beaufort, not my presumption. I have not dared to look steadily on any aim, higher than your esteem."

Mary knew not how to receive this address. The position in which he uttered it, his countenance, when she turned to answer him, were both demonstrative of something less equivocal than his speech. He was still grasping the drapery of her cloak : and his eyes, from which the wind blew back his fine hair, were beaming upon her, full of

that piercing tenderness, which at once dissolves and seizes the soul.

She passed her hand over her eyes. Her soul was in tumults. She too fondly wished to believe that he loved her, to trust the evidence of what she saw. His words were ambiguous, and that was sufficient to fill her with uncertainty. Jealous of that delicacy, which is the parent of the purest love, and its best preserver, she assumed a coldness, which was foreign to her heart, and whilst her concealed face streamed with tears, conjured him to rise. Instinctively she held out her hand to assist him. He obeyed: and hardly conscious of what she said, she continued:

"You have done nothing, my lord, to offend me. I was fearful of my own conduct—that you might have supposed—I mean, unfortunate appearances might lead you to imagine, that I was influenced—was so forgetful of myself——"

"Cease, madam! Cease, for pity's sake!" cried Thaddeus, starting back, and dropping her hand. Every emotion which faltered on her tongue had met an answering pang in his breast.

Fearing that he had set his heart on the possession of a treasure totally out of his reach, he knew not how high had been his hope, until he felt the depth of his disappointment. Taking up his hat, which lay on the grass, with a countenance, from which every gleam of joy was banished, he bowed respectfully, and, in a lowered tone, continued—"the dependent situation in which I appeared at lady Dundas's, being ever before my eyes, I was not so absurd as to suppose, that any lady could then notice me from any other sentiment than humanity. That I excited this humanity, where alone I was proud to awaken it, was, in

those hours of dejection, my sole comfort. It consoled me for the friends I had lost : It repaid me for the honours which were no more. But that is past ! Seeing no farther cause for compassion, you deem the delusion no longer necessary. Since you will not allow me an individual distinction in having attracted your benevolence, though I am to ascribe it all to a charity as diffused as effective, yet, I must ever acknowledge with the deepest gratitude, that I owe my present home and happiness to Miss Beaufort. Farther than this, I shall not— I dare not presume."

These words shifted all the count's anguish to Mary's breast. She perceived the offended delicacy which actuated every syllable as they fell; and fearful of having lost every thing, by her cold and haughty reply, she opened her lips to say something, which might better explain what she meant ; but her heart failing her, she closed them again, and continued to walk in silence by his side. Having allowed the opportunity to escape, she believed that all hopes of exculpation were at an end ; and, not daring to look up, she cast a despairing glance at Sobieski's graceful figure as he walked near her. His arms were folded, his hat pulled over his forehead, and his long dark eyelashes shading his downward eyes imparted a dejection to his whole air, which wrapped her weeping heart round and round with regretful pangs. "Ah !" thought she, "though the offspring of but one moment, they will prey on my peace forever."

At the turning of a little wooded knoll, this silent and pensive pair heard the sound of some one on the other side walking fastly through the heaps

of dried leaves. In a minute after, Sir Robert Somerset approached them.

Whilst his father advanced smiling towards him, Thaddeus attempted to dispel the gloom of his countenance ; but not succeeding, he bowed abruptly to the agitated Mary ; and hastily said, "I will leave Miss Beaufort in your protection, Sir ; and go myself and see whether or not lady Albina be recovered from her fatigue."

"I thought to find you all together," returned Sir Robert ; "Where is her ladyship ?"

"I left her with Pembroke in a hut by the river," said Thaddeus, and bowing again, he hurried away, whilst his father called after him to return in a few minutes, and accompany him in a walk.

This immediate desertion of Sobieski, when he had come expressly to attend her to lady Albina, nearly overwhelmed Miss Beaufort's before exhausted spirits : hardly knowing whether to remain or to retreat, she was attempting the latter, when her uncle caught her by the arm.

"Stay ;" cried he, "why Mary, you surely would not leave me alone ?"

Miss Beaufort's tears had gushed over her eyes, the moment her back was turned ; and as Sir Robert drew her towards him, to his extreme amazement he saw that she was weeping. At a sight so unexpected, the smile of hilarity left his lips. Putting his arm tenderly round her waist, (for now that her distress had discovered itself, her agitation became so great that she could hardly stand,) he inquired in an affectionate voice, what afflicted her ?

She answered by sobs only ; until finding it impossible to break away from her uncle's arms,

she hid her face in his bosom, and gave a loose to the full tide of her tears.

Sir Robert, recollecting the strange haste in which Thaddeus hurried from them; and remembering Miss Beaufort's generosity to him in town, followed by her succeeding melancholy, at once united these circumstances with her present confusion; and conceiving an instantaneous suspicion of the reality, pressed her with redoubled affection to his bosom.

"I fear, my dearest girl," said he, "that something disagreeable has happened between you and the count Sobieski? Perhaps he has offended you? Perhaps he has found my sweet Mary too amiable?"

Miss Beaufort, alarmed at this supposition, after a short struggle, answered, "O no, Sir! it is I who have offended him. He thinks that I pride myself on the insignificant services which I rendered to him in London."

This reply convinced the baronet that he had not been premature in his judgment: and, with a new born delight springing in his soul, he inquired why she thought so? Had she given him any reason to believe so?

Mary trembled at saying more. Dreading that every word she might utter would betray how highly she prized the count's esteem; she faltered, hesitated, stopped. Sir Robert put the question a second time in different terms.

"My loved Mary," said he, seating her by him on the trunk of a tree, which had been newly felled, "I am sincerely anxious that you and this young nobleman should regard each other as friends: he is very dear to me; and you cannot doubt, my sweet girl, my affection for yourself.

Tell me, therefore, the cause of this little misunderstanding."

Miss Beaufort took courage at the kindness of this speech. Drying her glowing eyes, though still concealing them with a handkerchief, she replied in a firmer voice, "I believe, Sir, the fault lies totally on my side. The count Sobieski met me on the terrace, and thanked me for what I had done for him. I acted very weakly; I was confused. Indeed, I know not what he said; but he fell upon his knees, and I became so disconcerted,—so frightened, of his having attributed my behaviour to indelicacy, or forwardness, that I answered something which offended him. And I am sure, he now thinks me inhuman and proud."

Sir Robert kissed her throbbing forehead, as she ended this rapid and hardly articulate explanation.

"Tell me candidly, my dearest Mary!" said he, "can you believe that a man of Sobieski's disposition would kneel to a woman whom he did not both respect and love? Simple gratitude, my dear girl, is not so earnest. You have said enough to convince me, whatever may be your sentiments, that you are the mistress of his fate: and, if he should mention it to me, may I tell him the scene, which has now passed between us? May I tell him that its just inference would requite his tenderness with more than your thanks and best wishes?"

Sir Robert ended the sentence in a gay tone; but Miss Beaufort, whose nice sensibility believed that the count must now despise her, looked down to conceal the wretchedness which spoke through her eyes, and, with a half suppressed sigh, answered; "I will not deny that I deeply esteem the count Sobieski. I admired his character before I saw him: and when I saw him, although ignorant

that it was he, my respect increased. Yet, I never have aspired to any share in his heart, or even his remembrance: I could not have the presumption. Therefore, my dear uncle," added she, laying her trembling hand on his arm, "I beseech you, as you value my feelings, my peace of mind! never to breathe a syllable of my weakness to him. I think," added she, clasping her hands with energy, and forgetting the force of her expression, "I would sooner suffer death than lose his esteem."

"And yet," inquired Sir Robert, "you will at some future period give your hand to another man?"

Mary, who did not consider the extent of this insidious question, answered with fervour, "Never. I never can be happier than I am," added she, with breathless haste, seeing by the smile on Sir Robert's lips, that far more had been declared by her manner, than the words intended. Fearful of betraying herself farther, she begged permission to retire to the house.

The baronet, now looking very serious, took her hand; and reseating her by him, said, "No, my dearest Mary; you shall not leave me, unless you honestly avow what are your true sentiments of the count Sobieski. You know, my sweet girl, that I have tried to make you regard me as a father; to induce you to receive from my love, the treble affection of your deceased parents, and my lamented wife. If my dear niece do not deny this, she cannot treat me with reserve?"

Miss Beaufort was unable to restrain her tears. Sir Robert continued.

"I will not overwhelm your delicacy by repeating the inquiry, whether I have mistaken the source of your recent emotion; only allow me to

bestow some encouragement on the count's attachment, should he claim my services in its behalf."

Mary snatched her uncle's hand to her lips, and kissing it, whilst her dropping tears fell upon it, threw herself impetuously on her knees, and replied in a timid voice; "I should be a monster of ingratitude could I hide any thing from you, my dearest Sir, after all this kindness! I confess, that I do regard the count Sobieski more than any being on earth. Who could see and know him, and think it possible to love another?"

"And you shall be his, my darling Mary!" cried the baronet, mingling his own blissful tears with hers; I once hoped to have contrived an attachment between you and Pembroke, but Heaven has decreed it better. When you and Thaddeus are united, I shall be happy; I may then die in peace."

Miss Beaufort sighed heavily. She could not participate in her uncle's rapture. She thought that she had insulted and disgusted the count by her late behaviour; and was opening her lips to urge it again, when the object of their conversation appeared at a little distance coming towards them. Full of renewed trepidation, she burst from the baronet's hand: and, taking to flight, left her uncle to meet Sobieski alone.

Sir Robert's anxious question received a more rapid reply from Thaddeus, than had proceeded from the reluctant Miss Beaufort. The animated gratitude of Sobieski; the ardent, yet respectful manner with which he declared her eminence above all other women, soon convinced the baronet, that Mary's retreating delicacy had misinformed her. A complete explanation was the consequence; and Thaddeus, who had not been more

sanguine in his hopes, than his lovely mistress was in hers, allowed the clouds over his sunny eyes to disappear.

Sir Robert, impatient to see these two beings, so dear to his heart, repose confidence in each other's affection, the moment he returned to the house, asked his sister for Miss Beaufort. Mrs. Dorothy having replied, that she had seen her about half an hour ago retire to her own apartments, the baronet sent a servant up stairs, to beg that she would meet him in the library.

This message found her in a paroxysm of distress. She reproached herself for her imprudence, her temerity, her unwomanly conduct, in having given away her heart to a man who never had required it. She remembered, that her weakness, not her sincerity, betrayed this humiliating secret to Sir Robert ; and, nearly at her wit's end with a beating heart, she was traversing the room, almost hoping, that she was in a miserable dream, when her maid entered with the baronet's commands.

Disdaining herself, and determining to regain some portion of her own respect, by steadily opposing all her uncle's deluding hopes, with an assumed serenity she arrived at the study door. She laid her hand on the lock, but the moment it yielded to her touch, all her firmness vanished ; and trembling and pale as death, she appeared before him.

Sir Robert having supported her to a chair, with the most affectionate and delicate expressions of paternal affection, repeated to her the sum of his conversation with the count. Mary was almost wild at this discourse. So inconsistent and erratic is the passion of love, when it reigns in a

woman's breast, she forgot in an instant, the looks and voice of Thaddeus; she forgot that tender parting letter, which even then she treasured in her bosom; she forgot her terror of having forfeited him, by her affected coldness alone; and dreading that the first proposal of their union had proceeded from her uncle, she buried her agitated face in her hands, and exclaimed; "O, Sir! I fear that you have made me forever hateful in my own eyes, and despicable in those of the count Sobieski!"

Sir Robert tried to assure her, that she alarmed herself without a cause; but she would not, she could not be pacified; she believed that her delicacy had been made a rash sacrifice; and was sitting gloomily weeping on a window-seat, when the baronet gently added, "Well, Mary, since I cannot prevail over this strange incredulity, I will call in a more powerful pleader."

He rose and opened the door which led to the dining-room. Miss Beaufort instantly got up, and flying to the opposite door, would have retreated, had not Sir Robert suddenly thrown himself in her way. He threw his arm about her waist, and turning her round, she saw the count, who had entered, standing, and regarding her with an anxiety, which covered her before pale features with blushes.

His father bid him come near. Sobieski obeyed, though with a step that expressed how reluctant he was to oppress the woman whom he so truly loved. Mary's face was now hidden in her uncle's bosom. Sir Robert put her almost lifeless hand into that of his son, who dropping on his knee, said, in an agitated voice, "Dearest Miss Beaufort, do you really recal those cruel words, which you directed to

me this morning ? May I indulge myself in the idea that I am blessed with your esteem ?"

She could not reply, but whispered to her uncle, " Pray, Sir, desire the count to rise ! I am already sufficiently overwhelmed."

" My sweet Mary !" returned the baronet, pressing her in his arms, " this is no time for deception on either side. I know both your hearts. Rise Thaddeus ;" said he to the count, whilst he locked both their hands within his ; " take him, Mary : receive from your uncle his most precious gift ; my matchless and injured son."

The shock which the first part of this speech occasioned Miss Beaufort would have sunk her exhausted spirits to insensibility, had not the extraordinary assertion at its end aroused and surprised her.

" Gracious Providence !" exclaimed she, " What do you mean, my dear uncle ?"

" Thaddeus will explain all to you," returned he, " May Heaven bless you both ! I leave you together ; and from him you will be confirmed in the truth of what I say."

Mary was too much astonished to think of following her uncle out of the room. She sunk on a seat, and turning her eyes full of amazement towards the count, seemed to demand an explanation. Thaddeus, who still retained her passive hand, pressed it warmly to his heart ; and whilst his effulgent eyes were beaming transport and love, he imparted to her, a concise, but impressive narrative of his relationship with Sir Robert, and their late arrangement. He touched with short, yet ardent enthusiasm, on the virtues of his mother ; he acknowledged the unbounded gratitude which was due to that God who had so wonderfully conducted

him to find a parent and a home in England; and with renewed pathos of look and manner ratified the proffer which Sir Robert had made of his heart and hand.

Mary listened with uncontrollable emotion to this interesting detail. Her eyes overflowed: their ingenuous language, enforced by the eloquent blood which glowed on her cheek, did not require the medium of words to declare what was passing in her mind. Thaddeus gazed on her with a certainty of bliss, which penetrated his soul until its raptures almost amounted to pain. The heart may ache with joy: neither sighs nor language could express what passed in the count's; he held her hand to his lips; his other arm fell unconsciously round her waist; and in a moment he found that he had pressed her to his breast. His heart beat violently. Miss Beaufort rose instantaneously from her chair; but her pure nature needed no disguise; she looked up to him, whilst her blushing eyes were raining down tears of delight, and pronounced, in a trembling voice, "Tell my dear uncle, that Mary Beaufort glories in the means by which she becomes his daughter."

She moved to the door: Thaddeus, whose full tide of transport denied him utterance, only clasped her hands again to his lips and bosom; then, relinquishing them with reluctance, he suffered her to quit the room.

CHAP. XIX.

CONCLUSION.

The magnificent establishment which this projected union offered to Sobieski seemed to heal the yet bleeding conscience of Sir Robert Somerset. Although he had acquiesced in the count's generous surrender of the family honours, his heart remained ill at ease. Every dutiful expression from this long neglected son stabbed him with availing remorse. Conscious that his criminal marriage with Pembroke's mother deprived the son of Therese of his just inheritance, he could never meet Sobieski's filial attentions without enduring pangs of self-reproach, which embittered all his joy. Miss Beaufort's avowed and returned affection, at once removed the sting of this incessant recollection: Mistress of immense wealth, her hand would not only put the injured Thaddeus in possession of those pure delights dependent on mutual sympathy of soul, but would empower his munificent spirit again to exert itself in the disposal of an almost princely fortune.

Such meditations having followed the now tranquillized baronet to his pillow, they brought him into the breakfast parlour next day, full of that calm pleasure, which promises a steady continuance. The happy family were assembled. Mrs. Dorothy saluted her brother, whose brightened eye declared that he had something pleasant to communicate; and he did not keep her a moment in suspense. With the first dish of coffee which was poured out, his grateful heart unburthened itself

of the delightful tidings, that before the present month should expire, Miss Beaufort would give her hand to the count Sobieski.

Pembroke was the only hearer who did not express surprise at this declaration : the transported Thaddeus had flown to his bed-side the preceding night, and with a bounding and enraptured heart, related the whole of the recent scenes.

During Sir Robert's animating speech, Mary's blushing, yet triumphant eyes, sought a veil in a branch of geranium, which she held in her trembling hand, and affected to smell.

Mrs. Dorothy rose from her chair ; her heightened colour, and glittering eyes, spoke more than her lips, when she pressed, first her niece, and then the count Sobieski, in her venerable arms.

"Heaven bless you both !" cried she, "This marriage will be the glory of my age."

Miss Beaufort turned from the embrace of her aunt, to meet the warm congratulations of Pembroke. Whilst he kissed her burning cheek, he whispered loud enough for every one to hear ; "And why may I not participate in my good aunt's triumph ? Attempt it, dear Mary ! If you can persuade my father to allow me to make myself as happy with lady Albina Stanhope, as you will render Sobieski, I shall forever bless you."

Lady Albina coloured like scarlet. Sir Robert took her hand with a smile of pleased surprise. "Do you, my lovely guest ? Do you sanction what this bold boy has just said ?"

Lady Albina made no answer ; but blushing deeper than before, cast a side-long glance at Pembroke, as if to petition his support. He was at her side in an instant ; then seriously, and earnestly entreating his father's consent to an union

with her ladyship, (whose approbation of his passion, he had obtained the preceding day in the shepherd's hut ;) he awaited with hoping anxiety, the sounds which seemed faltering on Sir Robert's lips.

The baronet, quite overcome by his darling Pembroke, having, like his brother, disposed of his heart so much to his own honour, found himself unable to say what he wished ; and joining the hands of the two young people in silence, he hurried out of the room. He ascended to the library, where, kneeling down, he returned devout thanks to that all-gracious Being, who crowned one so unworthy with blessings so conspicuous.

Thaddeus, no less than his father, remembered the hand, which having guided him through a thorny but short path of sorrow, had in the end conducted him to an Eden of bliss ; his heart did not forget, even in the midst of gaiety and smiles, the ardent gratitude which was due to the beneficent Dispenser of his happiness.

Before the lapse of a week it was discovered, that Sir Robert must hasten the marriage of Pembroke with lady Albina, or be forced by law to yield her to the demands of her father. After some search, lord Tinemouth learned that his daughter was under the protection of Sir Robert Somerset. Inflamed with rage and revenge, he sent to order her immediate return, under pain of an instantaneous appeal to the courts of judicature.

Too well aware that her non-age laid her open to the realizing of this threat, lady Albina fell into the most alarming fits on the first communication of the message. Sir Robert urged, that in her circumstances, no authority could be opposed to the earl's, except that of a husband's ; and on this

consideration she complied with his arguments and the prayers of her lover, directly to give that power into the hands of Pembroke.

Accordingly next morning by day-break, accompanied by Mrs. Dorothy and the enraptured Mr. Somerset, the terrified lady Albina commenced her journey to Scotland ; that being the only place where, in her situation, the marriage could be legally solemnized.

Whilst these young runaways chaperoned by an old maiden aunt, were pursuing their rapid flight to Gretna Green, Sir Robert sent his steward to London, to prepare two houses near his own in Grosvenor square, for the reception of his children. During these necessary arrangements, a happy fortnight elapsed at Deerhurst. Thrice happy to Mary, because its tranquil hours imparted to her captive heart '*a sober certainty of that waking bliss*,' which had so often animated the visions of her imagination. Morning, noon, and evening, the companion of the count Sobieski, she saw, with added enthusiasm, that the sublime and princely virtues did not reign alone in his bosom. Their insufferable brightness was rendered less intense, was beautifully veiled, by the softening shades of those gentle amiabilities, which are the soothers and sweeteners of life. His breast seemed the residence of love : of a love, that not only infused a warmer existence through her soul, but diffused such a light of benevolence over every being within its influence, that all appeared happy who caught a beam of his eye ; all enchanted, who shared the magic of his smile. Under what different effects had she seen this man ! Yet how consistent ! At the first period of their acquaintance, she beheld him, like that glorious orb, which her

ardent fancy told her he resembled, struggling with the storm, or looking with steady grandeur through the clouds which obscured his path: But now, like the radiant sun of summer amidst a splendid sky, he seemed to stand, the source of light, and love, and joy.

Thus did the warm fancy, and warmer heart of Mary Beaufort, paint the image of her lover; and when Sir Robert received intelligence that the Gretna Green party were arrived in town, and were impatient for the company of the dear inhabitants of Deerhurst, she confessed that some embers of human frailty did sparkle in her bosom, at the anticipation of witnessing the homage, which they who had despised the unfriended Constantine, would pay to the declared and illustrious Sobieski.

The news of lady Albina's marriage enraged the earl of Tinemouth almost to madness. Well aware, that his withholding her ladyship's fortune would occasion no uneasiness to a family of Sir Robert Somerset's vast possessions, he gave way to still more vehement bursts of passion; and, in a fit of impotent threatening, embarked, with all his household, to spend the remainder of the season on his estates in Ireland.

This abrupt departure of the earl's caused lady Albina little uneasiness. His unremitted cruelty, her brother's indifference, and the barbed insults of lady Sophia Lovel, wrankled too deeply to leave any filial regret behind. Considering their absence a suspension of pain, rather than a punishment, she did not stain the kiss, which she imprinted on the venerable cheek of her new parent, with one tear to the memory of her unnatural father.

Whilst all was preparation, splendour, and happiness in Grosvenor-square, Thaddeus did not for-

get the excellent Mrs. Robson. He hastened to St. Martin's-lane, where the good woman received him with open arms: Nancy hung, crying for joy, upon his hand; and sprung rapturously about his neck, when he told her, that he was now a rich man, and that she and her grandmother should live with him forever. "I am going to be married, my dear Mrs. Robson; that angel, who visited you when I was in prison, has *wiped away all tears from my eyes;*" said he, and drying the cheek of his weeping landlady with his own handkerchief, he continued; "she commanded me not to leave you, until you had assured me, that you will brighten our happiness, by taking possession of a pretty cottage, which is close by her house in Hampshire. It is within Beaufort-park; and there, my Mary and myself will visit you continually."

"Blessed Mr. Constantine!" cried the worthy woman, pressing his hand, "myself, my Nancy; we are yours; take us whither you would;—for wherever *you* go, *there will the Almighty's hand lead us, and there will his right hand hold us.*"

The count rose and turned to the window; his heart was full; and he was obliged to take time to recover himself, before he could resume the conversation, to propose the proper dispositions for the speedy removal of Mrs. Robson and her granddaughter, to their new residence. He saw her twice after this; and on the day of her departure for Hampshire, he put into her hand the first quarterly payment of an annuity, which would henceforward afford her every comfort; and raise her to that easy rank in society, which her gentle manners, and rare virtues, were so admirably fitted to adorn. Neither did he neglect Mr. Burnett. It was not in his nature to allow any who had served

him to pass unrequited. He visited him on the day of his arrival; and having repaid him, with a generosity, which astonished even the good money lender, he took his sword, with the other relics of what were once so dear, and pressing them mournfully, yet gratefully, to his breast, re-entered Sir Robert's carriage and drove home.

Thaddeus next directed his steps to Dr. Cavendish's. He found his worthy friend at home, who received him with a welcome, which was increased to transport, when Thaddeus told him, with a smiling countenance, that he was that Sobieski, about whose wayward fate he had asked so many ill-answered questions. The astonished and delighted doctor embraced him with an ardour, which spoke better than language, his admiration and esteem. His amazement having subsided, he was discoursing with animated interest, on events, at once so fatal and so glorious to Sobieski, when a gentleman was announced by the name of Mr. Hopetown. He entered, and Dr. Cavendish, at the same time, introducing Thaddeus as the count Sobieski, Mr. Hopetown fixed his eyes upon him with an expression which neither of the friends could comprehend. Dr. Cavendish, a little disconcerted at the merchant's rudeness, attempted to draw off the steadiness of his gaze, by asking how long he had been in England.

"I left Dantzic," replied he, "about a fortnight ago, and I should have been in London five days since, but a favourite horse of mine, which I brought with me, fell sick at Harwich, and I waited until he was well enough to travel."

Whilst he spoke, he never withdrew his eyes from the face of Thaddeus, who, at the words *Dantzic* and *horse*, recollected his faithful Saladine;

and almost hoping that this Mr. Hopetown might prove to be the Briton, to whom he had consigned the noble animal, he now took a part in the conversation, by inquiring of the merchant, whether he were a resident of Dantzic.

"No, my lord;" replied he, "I live within a mile of it. Several years ago I quitted the smoke and bustle of the town, to enjoy fresh air and quiet."

"Last year," rejoined Sobieski, "I passed through Dantzic, in my way to England. I believe I saw your house, and remarked its situation: the park is beautiful."

"And I am indebted, count," resumed the merchant, "to a nobleman of your country, for its finest ornament. I mean the very horse I spoke of just now. He was sent to me one morning, with a letter from his brave owner, requesting me, by virtue of my ancestors, to give him shelter in my park. He is the most beautiful animal I ever beheld; and, unwilling to leave so sacred a deposit behind me, when I came to England, I brought him with me."

"Poor Saladine!" cried Thaddeus, his heart overflowing with remembrance; "how glad I shall be to see thee!"

"What! was the horse yours?" asked Dr. Cavendish, surprised at this apostrophe.

"Yes;" returned Thaddeus, "he was mine! and I owe to Mr. Hopetown, a thousand thanks, for his generous acquiescence with the prayers of an unfortunate stranger."

"No thanks to me, count Sobieski. The moment I entered this room, I thought that I recollected you to be the same Polish officer, whom I had observed on the beach at Dantzic. When I described your figure to the man who brought the

horse, he said it was the same who gave him the letter. I could not learn your lordship's name, but I hoped one day or other, to have the pleasure of meeting you again ; and of returning Saladine into your hands, in as good condition as when he came to mine."

Tears started into the eyes of Thaddeus.

" That horse, Mr. Hopetown, has carried me through many a bloody field ; he alone witnessed my last adieu to the bleeding corpse of my country ! I shall receive him again, as an old and dear friend ; but to his kind protector, how can I ever demonstrate the whole of my gratitude ?"

" To have had it in my power to serve the count Sobieski is a privilege of itself ;" returned Mr. Hopetown ; " I am proud of that distinction : and to be called the friend of a man, whom all the world honours, will be a title, which John Hopetown would not exchange to be made sovereign of the Indies !"

Before the worthy merchant took his leave, he promised Thaddeus to send Saladine to Grosvenor-square that evening ; and to accompany doctor Cavendish, to meet the count, the following day at dinner, at Mr. Somerset's.

Lady Albina Somerset's arrival in London was greeted by the immediate visits of all the people in town, who had been acquainted with the late countess of Tinemouth, or known to the baronet's family. Amongst the earliest names, whose tickets appeared at her ladyship's door, were those of lord Berrington, captain and Mrs. Montresor, and Dr. Blackmore. Lady Albina did not propose opening her gates to the gay world, until Miss Beaufort and the count were married, and they and she had been presented at court ; but having heard

Pembroke speak of the before-mentioned persons with particular respect, (when she took the list of her numerous visitors out of the porter's hand, she selected them as the first which should grace her table. To this groupe of friends, Thaddeus informed the fair bride, that he had taken the liberty to add Dr. Cavendish, and Mr. Hopetown of Dantzic.

When the count alighted at Mr. Somerset's door on the appointed day, he was rejoiced to see so many happy countenances. Lady Albina received Dr. Cavendish and Mr. Hopetown with graceful hospitality. But the lovely Mary, taking the hand of the generous protector of Saladine, pressed it warmly, and accompanied the action with a sincere avowal of her interest in every thing that was attached to the count. Sobieski turned towards lord Berrington, and the ever lively Maria Egerton, (now Mrs. Montresor) who both ran up to him at the same instant, to express their joy at not only seeing him again, but in a situation so consonant to his fame and quality.

Thaddeus replied to their felicitations, with a frankness and grace peculiarly his own; and was not a little surprised when Dr. Blackmore, a moment afterwards, recognized him to be the stranger, who had so much engaged his attention about a twelvemonth before. The count did not recollect the circumstance, until the good doctor brought the very hour to his remembrance, by mentioning the Hummums; and recapitulating the rudeness of the man in black, whose name he said, he had since learnt, was Loftus.

Pembroke could hardly hear the worthy clergyman to an end. He exclaimed against his vile tutor's indefatigable villany; and turning to Sir Robert, exclaimed, "My dear Sir, the recent hap-

py events have hitherto averted justice from seizing this man ; but I must beg, that his connexion with any thing belonging to us may end tomorrow. Write to him, and order him to resign his situation at Arun-house immediately.

The baronet promised ; and Sobieski, trying to change a conversation, which agitated his brother, addressed Mrs. Montresor on some general topic. Capt. Montresor joined them, and expressed great regret at the loss he should shortly suffer in the absence of his friend captain Roos.

" How ? Whither is he going ?" demanded his wife.

Montresor replied, by lamenting the ill state of lady Sara Roos's health, and the necessity which her husband found to carry her to Italy for its restoration.

" I met him this morning," continued he, " in despair about her."

Thaddeus too well divined, that this increased indisposition owed its rise to his return to town : and inwardly petitioning Heaven, that absence might complete her cure, he could not suppress the sigh, which her fatal devotedness to him wrung from his pity and his gratitude.

No one present, except the affectionate Mary, marked the transient melancholy which passed over his countenance. She, who had suspected the unhappy lady Sara's attachment, loved Thaddeus, if possible, still dearer, for the compassion that he bestowed on the victim of a passion, which is as inscrutable as destructive.

When the party descended to dinner, Mrs. Dorothy, who sat next to Thaddeus, rallied him upon the desertion of one of his most dauntless admirers. This strange attack, following so closely

the information relating to lady Sara Roos, summoned a fervid colour into the face of the count: he looked surprised, and rather confused, at the good old lady, who, smiling, related what she had been told that morning by her milliner, of Miss Euphemia Dundas having married a Scotch nobleman at Hamilton.

"So much the better for Miss Beaufort!" cried Pembroke: "Her jealous fears may now be at an end: little Phemy was no contemptible rival. Besides, Albina," said he, turning gaily to her ladyship, "you may congratulate yourself on the same score. I hear that an old friend of mine is going to take her loving sister off *my* hands. Come, lord Berrington, you must validate my report, for I learnt it of you."

His lordship smiled, and answered in the affirmative; adding, that a friend of his had written to him, as news, that "the eldest son of Sir Halerand Shafto was on the point of marriage with Miss Dundas, a rich East Indian heiress, who was visiting my lady Shafto, his mother."

Sobieski wished them happy. Lord Berrington protested, that the count was more generous than just.

"I vow to heaven," cried his lordship, "I never knew people, the aim of whose lives seemed so bent on mischief. Euphemia, pretty as she is, was better known by her spirit of tormenting, than by her beauty: and as for the poor squire, whom Diana has conjured into matrimony, I have little doubt of his future honours."

"Ah!" cried Mrs. Montresor, "Poor Acteon! I warrant she will allot him the punishment he merits, for stepping between her and that delectable Endymion fool, Lascelles!"

"A truce, my dear madam!" entreated Miss Beaufort.

"She does not deserve it of you," returned the laughing lady, pursuing the subject, until Mrs. Dorothy, and Sir Robert Somerset, were obliged to call very loudly upon charity.

Thaddeus, who knew not the nature of that disposition, which rejoices over the probable misconduct of our enemies, thought this part of the conversation by far the least pleasant of the day.

Pembroke's wish, with regard to Mr. Loftus, was complied with next morning. Doctor Blackmore having been prevailed upon to take charge of the young lord Arun, reluctantly bore the mandate for his predecessor's dismission, and set out the same day for the seat of his lordship's aunt.

Whilst Sir Robert Somerset denounced the guilty, he was careful neither to plunge him into fresh temptations, nor to suffer his crimes to injure the innocent. In pity to age and helplessness, he settled two hundred pounds per annum, on the wretched man's mother and sister in Wales. And shortly after, in consequence of Loftus's confessing that all Pembroke's allegations were but too just, Sir Robert adjudged one hundred more, to be yearly paid to the culprit himself; that, at least, he might not be induced to obtain subsistence by new villanies. As for the living of Somerset, which had been the price of Mr. Loftus's integrity, that, Sir Robert determined to bestow on Dr. Blackmore, whenever it should fall.

The appointed day being arrived, in which Miss Beaufort was to give herself, and her earthly happiness into the power of the only man, to whom, (having once beheld him,) she could ever have re-

signed them ; she pronounced her vows at the altar, with unsteadiness of tongue, but a fixed heart. And when she alighted at her own paternal mansion, in Kent, she received the congratulations of the old domestics, with a tenderness, an elevation of soul, which drowned her glowing and enraptured face in tears.

Mrs. Robson, and the joyous little Nanny, dressed in a white frock, new for the occasion, threw themselves at her feet, at the entrance of the drawing-room, and sobbed forth their happiness, in the count's arms, who gently raised them both ; and, embracing them with filial tenderness, hailed the old lady, as a parent ; and the sweet girl, as an adopted child. And Sobieski was fully sensible of the favoured path which Providence spread before him. He had passed through hosts of evils, and he now looked forward to a long Sabbath of peace and gratitude. He found it at Beaufort-hall. He enjoyed its full possession, when he returned to town, and saw his beautiful wife at the head of fashion ; not only adorning his house, but filling his home with all the ineffable comforts of domestic life, and domestic virtues.

One fine evening in which they were out together, she ordered the carriage to stop in Covent Garden ; when it drew up, she expressed a wish to walk through the church-yard. Thaddeus complied ; and before he had time to express his surprise at the strangeness of her request, she led him towards the grave of his revered friend Butzou, who was buried there. It was no longer the same ; a white marble tablet occupied the place of grass and yarrow. The count bent forward, and read, with swimming eyes, the following inscription :

Stop, traveller, thou treadest on a Hero!
Here
rests the body
of
Lieutenant GENERAL BUTZOU.

Sobieski's soul was pierced. Incapable of speaking, he led his wife back to her carriage; and placing her within it, clasped her suddenly and fondly to his breast. His tears gushed out in spite of himself, and mingling with hers, poured those thanks, those assurances of animated approbation through her heart, as made it even ache with excess of happiness.

Thus mutually endeared, we leave the family of Sir Robert Somerset. We leave Thaddeus Sobieski, blessed in the fruition of every earthly good. The Virtues, the Muses, and the Charities, were the guests at his table. Misfortune could not veil Genius from his eyes; nor Calamity obscure the brightness of the Just. Though banished from his native country, where his birth gave him dominion over rich territories, now in ruins; and a once numerous and happy people, now no more; he had not yet relinquished the love of empire: But it was not over principalities, and embattled hosts, that he wished to extend the sceptre of command: He wished to reign in the soul: His throne was in the hearts of the Good, the Amiable, and the Unfortunate. The unhappy of every rank and Nation found refuge, consolation and repose, amongst the shades of Beaufort. No eye looked wistfully on him, to turn away and weep; no voice addressed him with the petition of distress, to close

it with the sigh of disappointment: His smiles cheered the disconsolate; and his protecting arms warded off the approach of new sorrows. *Peace was within his walls, and plenteousness within his palaces.* And when a few eventful months distinguished their course with the death of the implacable destroyer of Poland, and general Kosciuszko (who was set at liberty by her successor) arrived in England, he was received with the warmest welcome, by his now happy friend. "Ah, my dear general," said he, as he clasped the veteran to his breast; "I am indeed favoured above mortals! I see thee again, on whom I believed the gates of a Russian prison had closed forever; I have all that remains of my country pressing upon my heart! all its valour, virtue, and heroism is now within my arms! Kosciuszko, my friend, my father, bless your son!"

Kosciuszko did bless him; and embalmed the benediction, with a shower of tears, more precious than the richest unction that ever flowed on a royal head;—they were drawn from the heart of a hero. Sobieski presented his lovely wife to his illustrious friend; and while he gratefully acknowledged the rare felicity of his fate, he owned that the retrospection of past misfortunes, like shade to a picture, gives to our present bliss greater force and brightness.

THE END.

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